

**A Cosmopolitan Handbook:
On the Ecology of Languages and the Force of Poetic Epidemics**

by
Allen Stack

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Abstract

This dissertation looks at alternative ways in which time is poeticized through ethical discourse. Here, the ethical imaginaries of Immanuel Kant, Aristippus the Cyrenaic, and Sidi al Mukhtar al Kunti are imaginal watersheds in the sense that each consolidated a poetic bloom of ethical and political imaginaries. Their respective impact on political life is conceived through the distributive tendencies for violence that these poetics help configure. The poetic epidemics which these authors' works consolidated and distributed in the form of international ethical thought constituted poetic epidemics in cosmopolitanism because of their linking of ethics to an international space.

Immanuel Kant was an 18th century German philosopher writing in Konigsberg and theorist of international constitutionalism who required a Newtonian poetics of objectile political units coupled with a teleological vision of singular historical progression to articulate his vision of international peace as emerging through conflict in the present.

Aristippus was a Socratic philosopher from Cyrene whose hedonism pre-dated Epicurus and bears a very different epistemology and ethics from both that of the Epicurians and of the Skeptics. The Cyrenaic school emphasized the *pathae* as central to both

epistemological and ethical focus and considered objects as having an inapprehensible quality. Their movement traversed the Mediterranean well into the Roman age. Sidi al

Mukhtar al Kunti was a multilingual ethicist writing in 18th century West Africa; his philosophy attracted a following across an international landscape as vast as Western

Europe. He brokered several peace agreements and was known for this in his time. His manuscript on diplomacy serves as a poetic watershed for the imaginal and poetic work

that went into forging his movement and the peaces that it enacted. Central to al Kunti's theory of diplomacy is a theory of mind and of the multiple temporalities of ambitious political selves. Lastly the dissertation delves into the temporal and ethical imaginaries of Plotinus, Augustine and Sophocles as interludes which serve to illuminate the scene.

Readers: Siba Grovogui, Jane Bennett, Naveeda Khan, Juan Obarrio, Olufemi Taiwo

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Prelude

This dissertation focuses on the issue of temporality and poesis in political ethics. It looks to three distinct international movements in political philosophy: the Kantians, the Cyrenaics and the Mukhtarians. These movements occupy multiple spaces, and each overlaps with broader Mediterranean spaces; hence, they share an interconnection with Mediterranean history. The proliferation of each of these movements—through their pedagogies and through the poetic imaginaries circulating therein—requires that we think ecologically about the entanglements of their respective profusions.

First, each movement—in its overlapping with Mediterranean and international life—faces multilinguality and translation. Secondly, to have traction in everyday life, each has to engage in the micro-political practices of bodies and the other materialities of everyday life. This they accomplish in part by offering alternative tropes of well-being—ranging from healing to piety, recovery, salvation etc... —in ways that aestheticize or poeticize objects and people in the world and endow them with varying degrees of ethicality and value. Third, each at times saddles itself to commercial movements as well as to the international poesis of religious symbolisms and peregrinations. Lastly and most importantly, each ethical movement is in dialogue with political crises, persecutions and the plight of refugees; therefore, each hosts a complex set of relationships between the poetics of political ethics and the conveyance of violent enactments.

Since the elements of these entanglements tend to defy singular linear temporalities or spatial consistency, the pedagogical proliferations of these ethical

philosophies tend to do the same. Just as epidemics are prone to circulate without regard to conceptual and social boundaries or to linear temporality and spatial consistency, so too each of these ethical movements traverses multiple languages and enters into the everyday lives of diverse populations. They, thereby, defy singular trajectories or ordered distributions.

With regard to the question of violence and the mobility of ecological life, each ethical movement is required to speak to the cosmopolitan questions of hospitality and of the stranger's right to life as separable from place of origin. It is particularly important that we attend to how each movement speaks to this question of the refugee's possibility for life as this is conditioned by the movement's poesis of time, space and ethics. What is clear is that each of these movements draws on a different political poetics of space and time, and each with important implications for the conditions in which refugees are received. This is due to the great degree of variation in how they aestheticize the potential ethicality of dissemblances and embodied differences in the world of space and time. It is important to examine these alternatives because they reveal the broader international norms and practices that these ethical movements become both expressions of and agents for.

To discern the ecological entanglements of these spaces and the epidemic tendencies of a movement's poetic life requires thinking about their political implications, which is to say, thinking about in terms of the force of their temporal and spatial poesis. And this likewise requires thinking about the poetic imperatives that circulate in today's International Relations discourses. These manifest as distributions of

the potential for violence's perceived ethicality and do so along certain spatial and temporal parameters. When Kantian cosmopolitanism is contrasted with Cyrenaic and Mukhtarian cosmopolitanism, what becomes clear is that International Relations's tendency to favor Kantian poesis may not be the most fruitful approach to the challenge of peace at present nor to the question of refugees and hospitality. This is because of the manner in which the Kantian movement prefigures and normalizes a distribution of ethical violence for the purpose of peace. Therefore, examining a more diverse array of sensibilities by contrasting three alternative poetic epidemics in the ethicality of relations offers new perspectives for evaluating contemporary tendencies in the poesis of International Relations and for re-thinking the discipline's relationship to political ethics and to history. What we have to gain from this exercise is a better sense of poetic possibility within our discipline, and this by inviting back into the discussion a few important voices and movements whose dissemblance from contemporary discourse is not so much due to their cultural illegibility, irrelevance or temporal distance so much as it is a production of patterns of poetic exclusions that hinge on a set of arbitrary Kantian givens about the spatial and temporal imaginary of ethicality in international life.

I. The Poesis of Kantian Cosmopolitanism and the Reverie of Becoming Teleological

Each of us carries in himself the Image of his own world, his Imago mundi, and projects it into a more or less coherent universe, which becomes the stage on which his destiny is played out. He may not be conscious of it, and to that extent he will experience as imposed on himself and on others this world that in fact he himself or others impose on themselves. — Henry Corbin ¹

The force of poetics is that images that circulate widely give themselves over to more than thought but to ethical imaginaries and to political praxis. Poetics conveys imaginal force and bearing in the world. To investigate Kant's poetics—and not just his philosophy—means looking at how Kantian tropes and imaginaries circulate in the world and enact visions of and for the world. For a discussion that focuses on Kantian imaginaries and enactments, Kantian poetics are not localizable or exclusively attributable to Kant's authorship. Kant is a poetic watershed articulating a set of sedimented ambitions for thought and society. This watershed carries virulent imaginal strains and has come to speak across many places, times and languages. However, the international success of his poetic vision should also be understood in the context of the violent enactment through colonization of radical changes to the ecology of the poetisphere² and alongside the persistent extinction of languages and of poetic traditions for translating imaginations across languages. Nor are these extinctions unconnected to the present mass extinctions underway in our biosphere. The poetisphere is real; it is

¹ Henry Corbin (1960) *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*. trans. Willard Trask. Princeton University Press, 8.

² For the origin of the word, although deployed somewhat differently here, see Gaston Bachelard (1969) *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos*. trans. Daniel Russell. Boston: Beacon Press, 25.

every word being spoken and its loose connection to the tending-toward-intersubjectivity of thoughts in imaginal conveyances of force.

Whether in his own time or today, Kant has had many disciples in many disciplines such that mapping the force of his imagery and its multiple spawnings across these spaces would be absurd. Better would be to provide an example of the reverie that Kant's imagery inspired among his students, one of whom penned this:

How often he moved us to tears, how often he agitated our hearts, how often he lifted our minds and feelings from the fetters of selfish eudaimonism to the high consciousness of freedom, to unconditional obedience to the law of reason, to the exaltation of unselfish duty!³

That Kant's students were moved in this way, and frequently so, shows that his poetics had an immediate and profoundly moving effect on the minds and dispositions of his disciples. Social scientists should never forget how much pleasure people take—academics included—in speaking their truth, as it were, or likewise hearing publicly what they feel they always felt. Reverie and pleasure are two words that are not usually the first to be associated with Kant. But if Kantian poetics produce these reveries, this is in part because the genre of philosophy, within which Kant speaks and which he modifies, is for many a site of potential for such a revelrous poetic experience. The Socratic practice of elaborating critical wisdom has in many times and spaces been where a host of people of different capacities and with different expectations go for something they feel they need to say or hear said. In turning to philosophy for insight and inspiration, academics may often be more rigorous, but many people in popular

³ Cited in T. H. Irwin (1996) "Kant's Criticism of Eudaimonism" in *Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*. Cambridge University Press, 63.

discourse will readily iterate what they also hold to be a philosophical premise, and likewise have an image of what it means to be an idealist. As a preface, therefore, this reading of Kant's poetics situates itself between the lecture halls of his university students, his readerships in Germany, and the poetics of political thought that populate libraries, media and actions through the continued—and also contested—deployment of Kantian poetics, phrases and commentary as these participate in rendering imaginal worlds that are likewise spaces for action in the overlapping folds of a poetisphere that is also about conveying force and / as ethicality.

Reason's Bifurcated Distance from the Present World

There will always be more things in a closed, than in an open box.

— Gaston Bachelard ⁴

Of Kant's elaboration on the relation between reason and the understanding in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Eckart Förster writes, "The concepts through which reason produces its unity are the ideas."⁵ Reason's role is to "free a concept of the *understanding* from the unavoidable limitations of possible experience."⁶ Thus in the first *Critique*, "Ideas of reason are 'categories [of relation] extended to the unconditioned' (A409)."⁷ In Förster's study of the *Opus postumum*, he finds reason's relation to the understanding has been completely reversed. Whereas, in the first *Critique*, "the understanding is the

⁴ Gaston Bachelard (1994) *The Poetics of Space*. trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 88.

⁵ Eckert Förster (2000) *Kant's Final Synthesis: An Essay on the Opus postumum*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 149.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

beginning of reason;”⁸ by the end of his life, Kant felt compelled to “reverse the order of reason and understanding.”⁹ The textual evidence that Förster cites is clear about this.

“Reason precedes, with the projection of its forms,” Kant wrote in the last fascicle of the *Opus postumum* (21:15, Op. 222). And in another passage, he states explicitly of the faculty of reason: “This is not the logical employment of reason, which merely concerns the formal element of knowledge, but is originator of itself” (21:106.18-20). Of the ideas of reason Kant now writes: “*Ideas* precede appearances in space and time” (21:88, Op. 252). These are no longer concepts of the understanding freed of the limitations of possible experience, but rather are representations generated by reason itself: “Ideas are images [*Bilder*] (intuitions), created a priori through pure reason, which, [as] merely subjective thought-objects and elements of knowledge, precede knowledge of things” (21:51, Op. 242). This is clearly no longer the doctrine of the first *Critique*.¹⁰

Förster then outlines why Kant feels compelled to reverse the order of the faculties and to posit reason’s primacy over the understanding. Briefly, the *Opus postumum* aims to sketch a metaphysics for the science of physics as distinct from natural science (the subject of the first *Critique*); Kant is confronted with the necessity for a priori categories that situate the understanding in reference to a cognition of matter in space as opposed to objects in nature.¹¹ For this transition to a metaphysics of physics (the study of matter in space) from a metaphysics of natural science (the study of objects in nature),

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.* 150

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.* 62-74

Kant ultimately posits the a priori transcendental idea of ether.¹² But then he is faced with the recurring problem of a thinking subject whose position is twofold in its relation to matter in space—both as self-conscious object under nature and as autonomous subject free to posit its own moral duty beyond nature.¹³ Therefore, in order to contemplate matter in space, the problem arises of how to provide for the distinction between the inner and the outer facets of the self; here the subject's intuition of its twofold self offers no ground or concept for the subjectively felt distinction of inner and outer; ether does not suffice for this. Förster writes:

Where do the concepts 'inner' and 'outer' come from? And where do such concepts as 'right', 'duty', 'freedom', on the one hand, and 'attraction', 'repulsion', 'space occupation', on the other originate? Do they emerge from the conceptual distance between what determines and what is determined? What could be meant here by 'distance'?¹⁴

In order to resolve this, Kant is required to posit the primacy of reason's ideas in a reversal of his theory in the first *Critique*. This 'distance' only makes sense for Kant—since it is internally perceived—as a distance between “two ideas in the production and interpretation of which [reason] constitutes itself as theoretical and practical reason,

¹² *ibid.* 88-91. Also in the first *Critique*, matter appears as a necessary exceptional ground for positing inner sense. “Except for *matter* we do not even have anything permanent on which, as intuition, we could base the concept of substance. And even this permanence is not drawn from outer experience, but is presupposed a priori as necessary condition of all time determination, and hence presupposed also as determinant of inner sense, with regard to our own existence, through the existence of external things.” Immanuel Kant (1996) *Critique of Pure Reason*. trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 291. Italics are in the original text.

¹³ Förster (2000) 161-2

¹⁴ *ibid.* 162

respectively.”¹⁵ The two ideas that are productive of this distance between the subject’s twofold inner and outer dispositions are God and the world.

“The *totality* of beings is a concept given a priori to reason, arising from the consciousness of myself. I must have objects of my thinking and apprehend them; otherwise I am *unconscious* of myself ... Reason inevitably creates objects for itself. Hence everything that thinks has a God” (21:82f, Op. 248). [...]

We can now give a preliminary answer to the question why, in the *Opus postumum*, Kant thinks that pure reason needs to precede the understanding. Pure reason needs to precede, we might say, because without its projections, thought could take no step into the world—indeed, without reason’s ideal of a world, there would not even arise the notion of a sensible outer.¹⁶

Kant ultimately conceives of reason’s primacy in terms of the divine distancing of God from the world. And this unfolds just as in the second *Critique* where Kant intuitively grasps the idea of freedom as a necessary distancing of the subject from the objectness of its appearance in nature. In the *Opus postumum* the difference is that this transcendental condition appears with a view to explaining the recurrent problem from the first *Critique*—the problem that never goes away of inner and outer dispositions within/as the self. Kant’s *Opus postumum* ultimately posits the primacy of reason’s ideal distinction between God and the world as a ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ conceptual bifurcation of the idea of limitless force. As qualitatively limitless, God has “only rights and no duties”;¹⁷ as quantitatively limitless, the world is the singular totality of things and “successor to the ether concept”.¹⁸ Here is where poetic inquiry is essential; a poetic

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.* 163

¹⁷ *ibid.* 162

¹⁸ *ibid.*

reading engages with the imaginary by which this distance is made to be felt as present for the reader. On the one hand, Kant uses very concise conceptual language in his philosophical definition of this ideal distance/ distinction: the difference between God and the world is ultimately the difference between qualitative force and quantitative force. On the other hand, it would be very difficult to poetically explain how the ideal distinction between qualitative and quantitative—or likewise the intuited freedom of the practical self as determined “to bring forth the highest good through the freedom of the will”¹⁹—could ever produce the kind of reverie his students experienced such that his purported triumph over “selfish eudaimonism” moved them to tears. If reason’s ground is an intuited conceptual distance or bifurcation that is likewise ideally connected and interactive through moral and political judgment; the connection of that distance must be imagined for it to have any meaning. In short, it must consist or be conveyed through the imaginary.

The becoming teleological of the Kantian moral subject is not a simple technical distinction between quantitatively forceful world and qualitatively forceful God. Poesis attends to more than the definitionalism of moral limitlessness versus voluminous limitlessness. Kant deploys an abundance of dramatic imagery to enact a characterization of reason’s project in the world through this bifurcation of reason’s principle ground. A poetic reading of Kant attends to the dramatic enactment of these Kantian distanciations in terms of what they imaginally perform for audiences. In a series of theoretical interventions as dramatic enactments through imagery, Kant

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant (1993) *Critique of Practical Reason* trans. Lewis White Beck. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 119.

ethically privileges that subject whose aesthetic appearance is most distanced from the lived present. He does this by rendering an imaginal ground for the most temporally distanced subject—a *telos* that becomes the ground of an emotively inspiring superior moral subject; this poetically enacted distancing of moral ground from the lived present of nature's manifold then serves as both the ethical and political link or thread connecting the present world with its distant moral end. This imaginal temporal configuration of ethicality in the present becomes the ground for imagining the possibility of ethicality's unfolding futurity.

Kantian Syntax, Poetic Folds and Dramatic Enactments

*Metaphors summon one another and are more coordinated than sensations, so much so that a poetic mind is purely and simply a syntax of metaphors. — Gaston Bachelard*²⁰

First a poetic reading of Kant would have to focus on his sentences and the embeddedness of his claims. The syntactical embeddedness of Kant's claims often mask the boldness of his assertions from plain view while distributing their assertiveness across a broader field of thought. For example in his essay, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent* first published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* in 1784, Kant writes in the explanation of his second thesis that "Reason in a creature is a faculty to extend the rules and objectives of the use of all of its powers far beyond natural instinct, and it knows no limits to its projects."²¹ The sentence bears several assertions, the

²⁰ Gaston Bachelard (1964) *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* trans. Alan Ross. Boston: Beacon Press, 109.

²¹ Immanuel Kant (1983) "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent" in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. trans. Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 30.

boldest and most thematic of which is that “reason knows no limits to its projects.” However, the syntax of the sentence—the fragmentation and interlacing of its claims—serves to generate a very different imaginal effect than the bare claim that “reason knows no limits.” The syntax effectively deflects reason’s limitlessness onto a broader set of tropes: reason’s facultative nature, reason’s project-based orientation, and instinct’s (feeble/ natural) subordination to reason’s (powerful/ virile) dominance. All of these outlets diffuse the mythological boldness of the claim that reason knows no limits by poeticizing its emotive relevance in terms of both the falsely conceived would-be limits of instinct and those limits properly conceived in accordance with reason’s facultative role.

By diffusing or redistributing the awing effect of an internal faculty of self-possessed limitlessness, Kant allows that awe to be dispersed elsewhere—for example across the species and out toward its divinely sanctioned end in Kant’s *Universal History*, but also manifest in the present through detached contemplation in the way of the philosopher-legislator of *Perpetual Peace*. And these two aspects of a singular temporal trajectory connecting the present with the future enact an aesthetics of intersubjective ethicality as performances of detachment from the natural present, but critically this is poeticized through highly emotive gendered and racialized motifs. If reason is distributed poetically across a field of conceptual backdrops more than it is defined by any stable discursive ground other than the internally felt distance between God and the world, then the intertextual distances that reason traverses or stretches across are the instances of a dramatic movement in the Kantian literature.

In the following passage from the “Critique of Aesthetic Judgment” of the third *Critique*, I have rendered in bold all the words and phrases that point to heights and distance as well as the words and expressions that emphasize virility and strength. In this essay on poetic folds, emphasis on image over conceptual philosophy helps us better understand the drama and reverie with which Kant and his sympathetic readerships engage in their perceived “triumph over selfish eudaimonism”.

[C]onsider [...] thunderclouds piling up in the sky [...], volcanoes with all their destructive power [etc...]. Compared to the might of these, our ability to resist becomes an insignificant trifle. Yet the sight of them becomes all the more attractive the more fearful it is, provided we are in a safe place. And we like to call these objects sublime because they **raise** the soul's **fortitude above** its usual middle range and allow us to discover in ourselves an **ability to resist** which is of a quite different kind, and which gives us the **courage** to believe that we could be a match for nature's seeming omnipotence.

For although we found our own limitation when we considered the immensity of nature and the inadequacy of our ability to adopt a standard proportionate to estimating aesthetically the magnitude of nature's *domain*, yet we also found, in our power of reason, a different and nonsensible standard that **has this infinity itself under it** as a unit; and since in contrast to this standard **everything in nature is small**, we found in our mind a **superiority over nature** itself in its immensity. In the same way, though the irresistibility of nature's might makes us, considered as natural beings, recognize our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge ourselves **independent of nature**, and reveals in us a **superiority over nature** that is the basis of a self-preservation quite different in kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us. [...] Hence if judging nature aesthetically we call it sublime, we do so not because nature arouses fear, but because it calls forth **our strength (which does not belong to nature within us)**, to regard as **small the object of our natural concerns**: property, health, and life, and because of this we regard nature's might (to which we are indeed subjected in these natural concerns) as yet **not having such dominance over us**, as persons, that we should have to bow to it if our highest principles were at stake and we had to choose between upholding or abandoning them. Hence nature is here called sublime merely because it **elevates our imagination**, making it exhibit those cases where

the mind can come to feel its own sublimity, which lies in its vocation and **elevates it even above nature.**

This self-estimation loses nothing from the fact that we must find ourselves safe in order to feel this exciting liking [...]. For here the liking concerns only our ability's *vocation*, revealed in such cases, insofar as the predisposition to this ability is part of our nature, whereas it remains up to us, as our obligation, to develop and exercise this ability. [...].

For what is it that is an object of the highest admiration even to the savage? It is a person who is not terrified, **not afraid**, and hence **does not yield to danger** but promptly sets to work **with vigor** and full deliberation. Even in a fully civilized society there remains this **superior esteem for the warrior**, except that we demand more of him: that he also demonstrate all the virtues of peace — gentleness sympathy, and even appropriate care for his own person — precisely because they reveal to us that **his mind cannot be subdued by danger**. Hence, no matter how much people may dispute when they compare the statesman and the general, as to which one deserves **the superior respect**, an aesthetic judgment decides in favor of the general. [...].

A person who is actually afraid and finds cause for this in himself because he is conscious that with his reprehensible attitude he offends against a might whose will is at once irresistible and just is not at all in the frame of mind needed to admire **divine greatness**, which requires that we be attuned to quiet contemplation and that our judgment be **completely free**. Only if he is conscious that his attitude is sincere and pleasing to God, will these effects of might serve to arouse in him the idea of God's sublimity, insofar as he recognizes in his own attitude a sublimity that conforms to God's will, and is thereby **elevated above any fear of such natural effects**, which he does not regard as outbursts of God's wrath. [...] This alone is what intrinsically distinguishes religion from superstition. The latter establishes in the mind not a reverence for the sublime, but fear and dread of that being of superior might to whose will terrified person finds himself subjected but without holding him in esteem [...].

Hence sublimity is contained not in any thing of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of **our superiority to nature within us, and thereby also to nature outside us** (as far as it influences us). Whatever arouses this feeling in us, and this includes the *might* of nature that challenges our forces, is then (although improperly) called sublime. And it is only by presupposing this idea within us, and by referring to it, that we can arrive at the idea of the sublimity of that being who arouses deep respect in us, not just be his might as demonstrated in nature, but even more by the ability with which we

have been endowed, to judge nature without fear and to think of our vocation as being sublimely above nature.²²

If you would forgive such an unseemly long citation, reading at some length generates the poetic disposition in which readers encounter the interlacing of images within the text. These images are embedded not only syntactically but also in the narrative folds of Kant's conceptual writing. Prior to Kant's *Opus postumum*, the third *Critique* is already pressing the idea of God's sublimity by insisting on the moral possibility of "admiring divine greatness". All of Kant's moral and aesthetic philosophy in the above passage seems folded into another bold and yet dramatized claim: "to admire divine greatness requires that our judgment be completely free"—i.e., guided by pure reason's ideal attenuation of the distance between God and world, an attenuation aesthetically performed as detachment from present nature—but, problematically phenomenologically detached from the present as external present. Here freedom and divine greatness go hand in hand with solitude and alienation from the present of sensoria, affect and manifold as we must be attuned to "quiet contemplation" in order to think of "our vocation as being sublimely above nature".

When Bachelard says that "all positivity makes the superlative fall back on the comparative,"²³ he is making a simple point. It would be impossible to have any image of the best skier in the world without thinking in terms of other skiers and what they are doing. Likewise, superlative moral exceptionality from the natural present is

²² Immanuel Kant (1987) *Critique of Judgment*. trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 120-1. Italics are in the original text.

²³ Bachelard (1994) 89

unthinkable in terms of a divinely present *telos* other than by a world populated by other morally oriented characters who are cited for their varying degrees of detachment from the natural present and for their conformity with an imagined static and totalizing end. Completely freeing judgment from nature is an image of superlative exceptionality; therefore, it too must fall back on some aesthetic comparisons of the present, and these must then also inform the imagination since they are rendered as comparisons *in the present*.

Conceptually, becoming aware of nature's purposiveness hinges on a temporal distinction/distance between present natural spectacle and divinely proscribed end—one that must be felt internally/imaginally as also connected in the present self. But, in the passage above, the Kantian poetic enactment of this teleological temporality in the present—in an aesthetic of the sublime—comes through spatial referents to topographical distance and stoic virility. The self's liberation, as the liberation of judgment from the present manifold, is a temporal liberation that supposedly uncovers a *telos* of future purpose, but the *telos* must be poetically located in the present for it to have its effect—thus distant purpose as end is imaginally sensed/intuited as the presence of purposiveness. This totalizing temporal linearity situates the present as a moral trajectory away from itself as present manifold of bodies under the singular historical line of totalizing purpose, but this 'purposiveness' must necessarily be ambiguous and risks, therefore, becoming meaningless—not being emotively and ethically moving. The natural impossibility of the aesthetic self's total liberation from the present manifold and relocation into the future end means that this temporal teleological

distance must be felt and therefore poeticized in the imaginal present of the manifold. Conceptually, this teleological orientation is a maximum temporal distance; however, to become internal directive in conformity with a linear trajectory as guided by a dislocated end, that end must be made aesthetically present. This linear trajectory is said to be reason's rendering of ethical connection between present and future purpose for mankind. But for reason's dislocation to be emotively forceful in this manner, it must be poeticized and given emotive bearing. To resolve the potential for excessive ambiguity and meaninglessness for Kant's readership, judgment's intuited capacity for liberation through the poetics of reason's temporal bifurcation becomes the stage for inscribing a subject's moral purpose in accordance with a self's performed poetic dissemblance from present 'nature' in favor of a radically distant but intuitively present set of images—images, for example, of martial virility and an elevation of topographical heights—such that this temporal construct for ethicality can be felt to offer an emotive, agential and political course.

In order to arrive at the moral objective—"to judge nature without fear and to think our vocation as being sublimely above nature"—a host of motifs give readerships *a sense* of what this moral vision means or looks like in the present. The possibilities for ethicality are thereby distributed poetically across differing social bodies. The images of the warrior, the savage, the statesman, the general, the fully civilized society, God, nature, the storm, and, the house of safety. These are enlaced with sensorial imagery of elevation, superposition and fortitude. Are these images just flourishes for an otherwise sound metaphysical theory of time? Not in the case of Kant's political imaginary.

Without populating a spatial imaginary of the present with some set of poetic figures and rendering their conformity to imaginal visions of a distantly future divine order, teleological time would be stripped of political import in the present. Or, at the very least, Kant's political ethics would just look like a German rendering of either Plotinus's or Augustine's theories of bifurcated temporality and of their respective political ethics. In other words, with Kant's teleological poetic characters as they produce progressive linear temporality, Kant's bifurcation of time would end in something like Plotinus's Platonopolis as a political project, or—more likely—end in something like Augustine's political vision of Roman empire's necessary continuation for the purpose of maintaining the temporal conditions for the awaited mass conversion to Augustine's Catholic church. Without the singular linearity of progressive trajectory that Kant's poetics of teleological time to enact imaginally, he would not be able to articulate a theory of international constitutionalism.

The *telos* of nature's purpose, therefore, must be given presently through imagery cast as temporal intuition, and this happens in the way of poeticizing emotively a feeling of divine 'purposiveness' in the present. In contrast to the temporal concept of *telos* as end or purpose, the divine *telos* of ethicality's orientation in the dramatic present is cast poetically in the spatial and emotive referents to excessive topographical heights. Secondly, ability and vocation for this intuited vista of the world beneath it is rendered in terms of virility and a readiness for martyrdom: that "we should [not] have to bow to [nature] if our highest principles were at stake" means the idea of martyrdom within is a sign that, if given over to the right cause, achieves its moral end in nature. This makes

sense for Kant because for him linear time is aestheticized as the accumulation of intergenerational toil and hardship.²⁴ Hence, Kant is dependent on a state of nature aesthetic which, instead of sovereignty or social contract as morality, endorses—through teleological temporality—stoic martyrdom as a poetic imagery of ethicality's temporal continuity. Stoic martyrdom works as an aesthetic of teleological judgment. However, stoic martyrdom is also a problem in terms of political agency and singular course of history in the present because the stoic martyr lacks a linear continuity as ideally presented in the aesthetic of the sublime. Therefore, in Kant's political writings, constitutionalism will provide linear continuity and the stoic martyr as sign will be given ethical agency in a linear and progressive sense through a bifurcation that accommodates the present's temporal bifurcation into nation (linear time) and moral-rational legislative (teleological time). The constitutional order requires the stoic martyr take two forms to accommodate two alternative temporalities unified in the constitution—the one is the stoic warrior defending the provisional order of the present in the forms of nation object of stability across linear time; stoic warriors performances of detachment accordingly become a cultural production with often dire consequences for the warriors themselves and their families. The second is the monastic philosopher charged with rationally legislating the future *telos* in the present. This form for political ethicality as law may acquire multiple poetic possibilities beyond Kant, but the performances of detachment on both rational and forceful as agents of moralities along alternative temporal scopes endure. Therefore, the poetic aestheticizations of professional

²⁴ Kant (1983) "Universal History", 31

classes of juridical, bureaucratic, or intelligentsia—with which Gramsci, Weber and Habermas are preoccupied—all can be seen as imbricated likewise in a legislative poetics where performances of detachment from the lived present—however superficial or culturally hegemonic—are necessitated in accordance with the temporal imaginary of public ethicality as rendered through Kantian constitutionalism.

Political Projection of Stoic Anti-Eudaimonism

Dear Monsieur Corbin. Your Avicenna never leaves my table. But with each re-reading, I see in it more complexity. [...] Your book has such importance that I would like to study it without ceasing ... I believed that then I was touching the poetry of fire. ... But where are the poems of the Perisian poets? ... It is the élan of verticality that I received from each page of Terre Céleste. ... Reading you, I imagine that I yet could have the power to speak of the dynamicity of human verticality.

— Gaston Bachelard ²⁵

Poetics forces us to think about what Kantian syntax and imageries enact for his readerships and in the world. Reading Kant as a watershed of poetic aspirations enables us to think about how the political-philosophical selves of 18th century Europe were imaginally primed to either feel what Kant felt in the way of a reverie with regard to his ideas, or to feel that his ideas constituted a substantial enough imaginal movement among publics that they should be revised. Having begun this presentation of Kantian poetics with a review of both the conceptual and dramatic rendering of reason's intuited dislocation from the lived present, the second section then explored the poetic production of distance whereby Kant visits ethical privilege on those social bodies

²⁵ Cited in David Miller (2010) "'The Body is No Body'" in *Apophatic Bodies: Negative Theology, Incarnation, and Relationality*. eds. Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller. New York: Fordham University Press, 142-3.

whose performances of detachment from the natural present are overdetermined for judgment by his aestheticizing of the *telos* in the present in the form of a totalizing purposiveness to which all things properly ethical must be seen to refer to. This temporality and the poetics it requires have profound implications for Kantian cosmopolitanism.

Distant teleological time and present knowledge of it are two different things. Likewise, knowledge of what that *telos* looks like and knowledge of who and what participate agentially in the present's progression toward that *telos* are two different knowledges. Kant requires signs in the present in order to connect these separate knowledges to a universal political ethics in a way that he may not have required in the second *Critique's* production of a personal moral ethics. Here the reader must have an image of the future and of its connection in the present as politically and institutionally productive; this must bear a theory of causality or process that is social in a way that ethics did not require. In *Universal History* Kant writes that there may one day be a philosopher who becomes the narrator of the human species in its political purpose, which is likewise assumed as nature's highest expression of its own purpose. Kant says that philosophy will write "the guiding thread of history" in the way that Newton explained Kepler's laws by means of something universal".²⁶ Yet there is more Newtonian poetics in Kant than this small reference. Kant cannot conceive of natural causality other than as linear progression; in this sense, his views on politics are also Newtonian in their spatial and temporal imaginary of the present as political process—

²⁶ Kant (1983) "Universal History", 30

which is to say, as a natural manifold of distinguishably different units with object-like stability across time that are likewise beholden to some law that singularly governs linear progression. Without this assumption, constitutionality and its perfection internationally, as rational political ethics, simply would not work.

Just as in the present nature, all organs have a purpose; reason's appearance, like that of free will in the second *Critique*, must have a purpose whose end has not been realized since reason wants universals and order but does not have these in the political present. Therefore, since all things have a purpose, reason's must be not yet realized. So nature has a divine end, or it would not have given man reason. Conceiving otherwise, Kant says, would be akin to seeing nature as engaged in child's play.²⁷ In nature's divine purpose of temporal teleology, reason is the only conceivable universal cause—hence reason is said to be a species-wide phenomenon and, therefore, non-localizable. Reason's political expression, as the generalizing enactment of morality, must be accordingly general and universal. This gives law its Kantian form. But Kant requires a state of nature aesthetic in order to posit such a law in terms of its dual temporality. In *Universal History* antagonism gives rise to law's positivity. Law's rational form requires judgment be rational and therefore liberated from the present, and therefore the distribution of ethical capacity in the present is accomplished through an aesthetic performances of detachment—e.g. the stoic soldier or the monastic philosopher; aesthetic appearances of detachment here ground universal generalization of morality—the only proper morality imaginable for a public within these temporal confines.

²⁷ *ibid.*

The concept of law thus presupposes permanence as the only proper template for reason's inscription. Since the nations of the present are given as finite object, the form of law as temporal permanence is particularly important. Reason's transcendently assumed universality requires that law, as reason legislated, take the form of universality. In the absence of spatial universality over all political bodies—the entire species, law must be legislated to a particular body in the form of the temporally universal for that particular—i.e. the form of permanence for that body. Law's form must, therefore, take the following form as equivocal of reason's form: 'whatever you, nation, become, this law will serve you to the end as your reason is that thread of permanence guiding in toward a totalizing ethical purpose.' Law's proper template of generality is the nation's temporal persistence—nation as phenomenally stable object and therefore, proper to reason's vocation. In the absence of a totality of spaces where law can inscribe itself in its proper form as assumedly universal in the present, law must inscribe itself in the form of temporal universality for some particular object in the present, and yet then must also be an experimental positing of its universality. Therefore, the subject nation must admit the law's permanence for itself in its form, but also admit, because the full reality of the divine purpose is yet ambiguous, that this law is also provisional—a provisional order.

The Newtonian universal cause here is reason's manifest purpose as enactment of the natural *telos* intuited imperfectly in the present as nature's 'purposiveness'. But this ambiguity in the present—this slippage between presently intuited purposiveness and agency's practical need to imagine the present in terms of singular purpose—does

not stop Kant from positing the political end in quite clear terms.: the end is the achievement of the perfect constitution as “the sole state in which all of humanity’s natural capacities can be developed”.²⁸ So there may be more to the story of nature’s purpose as unknowable—i.e., more in the way of “development of human capacities,” etc... But there is no politics beyond this constitutionally perfected peace of nations. There will only just be criminals. The perfect constitution is the end of *political* history. This, then, is the provisional *telos* in political terms: that it presents the possibility for social ethicality in absolute conformity with the Newtonian temporally stable object of linear progressive causality. In short, reason must make its will provisionally permanent—this form of positive law must be as such, so that we, as a species, can be better than what we are.

This comparison of what we are with what we are meant for is not quantitative but rather qualitative. The present progression is Newtonian in linear continuity but the grounding universal cause of reason is as removed from the objects as the law of gravity appears. The problem is actually more complicated for Kant than for Newton. This is because reason is intuited as present in the self in a way that Newtonian gravity is not intuited to be present in the objects but rather etherially omnipresent—a given law of things. Therefore, reason’s temporal dislocation from the present yet as intuited in the present requires some imaginal or poetic rendering of a universal spatial presence in the present to perform its illocality as detached purity from the lamentable ethically uninspiring present manifold. The species offers Kant the kind of Newtonian

²⁸ *ibid.* 36

distribution of reason illocally that he requires in order to render nature's purpose universally applicable. It likewise offers the possibility for reason's linear progression in the present as a trajectory of the singular manifold—the world.

Reason's enacting of singular progression from the singular object-nation to the universal whole of constitutional perfection thereby achieves its proper vocation of legislative universality across both time and space. Kant imagines that the universal cause is reason's persistent intergenerational effort to which we are morally obliged to submit ourselves, but since linear Newtonian process governs the present, Kant's political morality requires rationally stable nation-objects with temporal permanence and objectile stability for reason's progression of political ethicality to enact ethicality in the world. Under this temporal imaginary, all efforts for survival that are not reasonable in this regard are not properly ethical, but just natural instinct. Kant does not care about the survival of the nation or of a family other than in their conformity to provisional order as reason's template for the universal peace. The provisional order is the requisite continuity for imagining ethicality's projection into the future. Peace is just order, order maximized. The nation's constitution, as the form of objectile stability, maintains the linear continuity that Kant's Newtonian vision of ethical process requires—a linear continuity from present provisional order to end of history imagined as the only conceivable possibility for ethicality's persistence in what must necessarily—in Newtonian form—be maintained in the form of singular projection across space. Locality means nothing other than as it contributes to the formation of the ethical uniformity of space.

However, the species-wide end is qualitatively different from the present. The species's embetterment does not rise like a thermometer. From war we get peace. Just like from antagonism we get law. Law needs, therefore, to establish itself internationally as end, but also linearly in the present as provisional order. Perfection of constitutionality is imagined through a play of internal and external perfection just as reason is imagined as thus bifurcated ideally in the self. The internal coherence and stability of the nation is the first historical problem to which the progression away from state of nature faces; this is because the self in Kant never faced this problem of itself as potentially failing to be objectile unit in nature. External perfection of the constitution is secondary. Therefore, for international peace to be contemplated—i.e. to imagine the possibility of ethicality in *the future of the world*—the provisional order as the consolidation of coherent national units under the template of constitutionality must be enacted. The whole world must be of mutually individuated nations conforming—as ground for the possibility of political ethicality to be imagined—to the form of its laws's permanence; this is because otherwise social bodies have no objectile stability across time and, therefore, no connection with reason as the thread of universal moral causality. The provisional internal orders of nations, as object-templates for reason, are always the condition for imagining the possibility of ethicality's appearance in the future. Hence, the present aestheticized concept of a failed state threatens the possibility of ethicality's futurity in the world. There must always be a present intuition of the *telos* that is not present. In this form, constitutionality is the rendering in objectile permanence that is proper to reason's continued deliberation and enactment. In this form, constitutionality

is also the rendering of the provisional order as provisionally moral. Therefore, constitutionality is also always exported, as the spatial rendering universal of the template of reason for the species. Insofar as the provisional order is yet provisional, it may be modified by rational deliberation. However, the requisite condition for rationality is at once articulated—since reason is grounded in a temporal distance but intuitively enacted across the spatial expanse of the species—as governed by aesthetic performances of detachment as ground for political-ethical trust and reliability.

Hospitality, Poetic Force and the Anxiety of Ethicality's Future

This is where the phenomenological doublet of resonances and repercussions invite us to give greater depth to our own existence. In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own. The reverberations bring about change in being. It is as through the poet's being were our being. The multiplicity of resonances then issues reverberations' unity of being. Or, to put it more simply, this is an impression that all impassioned poetry-lovers know well: the poem possesses us entirely.

—Gaston Bachelard ²⁹

The human species as the vessel of reason's enactment is the locus for the dramatic unfolding of this twofold temporality of causation—manifold, objectile, linear, natural causality, on the one hand, versus unified, moral, teleological, purposive causality, on the other. The drama of Kantian poetics is to constitute human subjective imaginaries in terms whereby teleological time infiltrates linear time through the reverie of reason's intersubjective historical triumph. Poetically Kant must move readerships to

²⁹ Bachelard (1994) xxii

feel future teleological unity *in the present*, and this occurs along certain gendered, racial, civilizational and spatial imaginaries. This temporal bifurcation is continuously being poeticized in ways that embody and historicize the human drama and which spatially and temporally orient the imaginary of ethical possibility within the lived present. Here, the singularity of the future order requires a singular topography of the spatial imaginary of the present political order in the form of singular linear progression in the present. Exceptionality in the present is aesthetically enacted by imaginings as the distribution of potential ethicality across those elements who poetically appear as images and custodians of singular order. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the dramatic content of Kantian reverie through the iterations of its temporal bifurcation; this means examining, as a poetic reverie, the becoming teleological of this *Imago mundi*.

From the publishing of *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent* in 1784 to *Perpetual Peace*'s publication in 1795, the position of Kant as author/narrator moves from one of a philosopher issuing Newtonian laws to a philosopher legislating constitutions—a philosopher whose authority Kant, writes in *Perpetual Peace*, should be consulted in secret by statesmen more than they consult the people.³⁰ Here, the sign—poeticizing figures like the shepherd as socially embodied figures—in the present, as it is the site of the imaginal of temporal intuition connecting political present to future of ethicality's imagined possibility, is required for Kant in order to exhibit the present's inethicality and to evidence of the need for projection of ethical progress in the present—the need to modify the provisional order. This temporal tension in the sign poetically

³⁰ Kant (1983) "Perpetual Peace", 126

distributes imagined agential capacities for ethicality in the world across social bodies according as an assumed ethicality of the provisional order as projection for future's ethicality to even be imagined in the present.

These two elements of the present—the species and the provisional order—with some degree of tension, coalesce with poetic images in an ethical political enactment of a singularity of future in the present. Teleological time, with its singular end, enacts the possibility for judgment to evaluate the ethicality of social bodies singularly in terms of that end. Therefore, ethical value becomes singular in terms of that end, and the singularity of valuation is thus central in the poetic mobilization of the perceived historical trajectory and its anticipated distribution of violence. What is valued ethically and politically in the present? What is worthy of the future that we can already see? That is the question for which provisional constitutional order is posited as a response which assumes a distribution of ethically admitted violences over the immanent course to the future. But even constitutional order needs to distance itself from the present if it is to maintain its form of ethicality. This is Kantian politics in the present. Since the future is singular order, then what ever order in the present in the way of provisional order—if open to reason's legislation—must, therefore, contain kernels of futurity that allows us to imagine the possibility of universal ethicality.

Without those characteristics of unsociability [...] man would live as an Arcadian shepherd, in perfect concord contention and mutual love, and all talents would lie eternally dormant in their seed; men docile as the sheep they tend would hardly invest their existence with any worth greater than that of

cattle; and as to the purpose behind man's creation, his rational nature, there would remain a void.³¹

With this poorly informed notion that pastoral life is obviously harmonious and without strife, it is interesting to pause and consider the temporal complexity of intergenerational survival of Arcadian life. Grazing involves multiple temporalities—seasonal cycles punctuated with weather abnormalities like droughts etc... Grazing across intergenerational time on a peninsular economy in the Mediterranean where negotiations of mutual protections against starvation from errant drought or other events must likewise be entangled socially and politically with coastal economies etc... And all of these feature multiple spatialities that are negotiated and can be more or less accommodating. When Kant invokes the Arcadian shepherd in a restatement and the intuited purposiveness of nature from the third *Critique*—although here slipping into positing “purpose” as such, he says the following in order to justify violence in the present and thereby furnish hope that peace must be the purpose of violence.

Antagonism [...] is the cause of law-governed order in society. [...] Man has a propensity for living in society, for in that state he feels himself more than man, i.e. feels himself to be more than the development of his natural capacities.³²

Kant bears the same nostalgia for the future as Nietzsche. In spatial and temporal terms, their alternative philosophies appear, alongside Hegel, as alternative styles of writing but not as any altogether unique strains of poetics. This opening to Kant's fourth thesis in *Universal History* antagonism—violence—is normalized. Hence, Kantian

³¹ *ibid.* “Universal History”, 32

³² *ibid.* 31-2

cosmopolitanism tolerates the Arcadian shepherd in the present but only provisionally on the understanding that he is not perceived or imagined as discordant in his ethics of contentment with the singular purpose of reason's guiding linear progression of that order towards something altogether qualitatively grander. And yet for whatever universal historical cause of Newtonian inspiration, reason, it is imagined, is dislocated temporally from the present of manifestation for a species-wide whole assumes antagonism as part of the ethical trajectory.

The poetics explain how present value is imagined in terms of its relevance and worth in that future. That the future is singular is also critical, because it means that judgment may be absolute and permanently so—at least transcendently we cannot rule it out Kant wants us to admit. The outcome is that order in the future—by which Kant means single coherent nation-objects not at war mapped on a singular political geography—renders the present in terms of maximum security open only to legislative modification. His maxims in *Perpetual Peace* are recommendations and Kant knows this. That is why he says that legislators must consult philosophers but in secret.³³

But if you are moved by an altogether different strain of poetics of space and time, one that eludes world-linear causal presumptiveness; then intergenerational survival takes on very different ethical and political forms of imperatives that are no less broad-reaching—i.e., cosmopolitan just less singularizing and tending toward platial ecology and multilinguality. To play a game of finger-pointing as to who invented the 'savage' is not really the point. Rather, it is to take hold of poetic figures whose

³³ *ibid.* "Perpetual Peace", 126

performative spatial role is suppressed from view in the Kantian poetic epidemic and to demonstrate a poetic epidemic of political force that is largely enacted across osmotic interdisciplinary porosities, porosities that poetically evidence which philosophers are irrefutably central to International Relations and which philosophers can only be brought in to speak the language of International Relations through great contortions and with the production poetically of their marginality upon arrival. To understand this requires interrogating the poetic epidemic of 'international space' as it is imaginably central to International Relations. This epidemic of poesis and its osmotic leveraging of a disciplinary ground through inter-disciplinary barriers bears a disciplinary academic ground that is also connected through osmotic and porous barriers to public justifications and decisions for dealing and distributing violences and as justifications these likewise hinge on epidemic imaginaries of ethicality and time.

Therefore, if Kant tells us that something is unimportant to what he is articulating conceptually, a suspicious reader should think of the spatial consequences for focusing in on the ethicality as Kant would poetically distribute it away from such a spatial configuration as made this object of mention also necessitating that Kant mention it. For example, in the long passage cited earlier from the third *Critique*, the one about the experience of the storm and the emotive poetic realization of sublimity's internality as potentially evidencing the internal idea of God's divine greatness; in this passage Kant's gently and briefly asserts that the internal sensations of the sublime are in no way conditioned by the requisite safety of the place from whence the terror is viewed. "This self-estimation [of sublimity] loses nothing from the fact that we must find ourselves

safe in order to feel this exciting.” Of course, the aesthetic of detachment requires that this be noted; and the fact that Kant is not so foolish as to wander about in these kinds of storms requires that he mention the house. But Bachelard, a philosopher with a strong poetics of place and focus on the lived present, seems to suggest that what Kant is experiencing is a projected fantasy about the human that in fact—unbeknownst to Kant—stems from the phenomenology of the house:

The house’s virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues. The house acquires a physical and moral energy of a human body. [...] Such a house as this invites mankind to heroism of cosmic proportions. It is an instrument with which to confront the cosmos. And the metaphysical systems according to which man is “cast into the world” might meditate concretely upon the house that is cast into the hurricane, defying the anger of heaven itself. Come what may the house helps us to say: I will be an inhabitant of the world, in spite of the world. The problem is not only one of being, it is also a problem of energy and, consequently, of counter-energy.³⁴

Contrast this with Kant’s distancing from the house in the passage above from the *Critique of Judgment* where Kant writes, “This self-estimation loses nothing from the fact that we must find ourselves safe in order to feel this exciting liking [i.e. sensation of the sublime within us] [...]. For here the liking concerns only our ability’s *vocation*, ...” The cosmic drama for Kant has nothing to do with the house (although Kant is so aware of the presence of the house in this scene that he is required to explain it away—albeit not very convincingly but the reverie of his sympathetic readership will tend to accommodate); rather the drama’s origination is an internal distancing as present in a felt vocation that appears illocalizable vis-à-vis nature or the lived present. Kant’s

³⁴ Bachelard (1994) 46-7

dependence on the emotive poetics of airy heights requires that the house be of no ethical consequent. The ethical import of these two imaginal dramas are in stark contrast. Both movements evoke a heroism for mankind's relation to the cosmos. But focusing on the house, as Bachelard does, and admitting its possible centrality to that experience of cosmic heroicism puts us in a completely different ethical orientation with regard to the present. The most pronounced difference turns on how the possibility for ethicality in the world and for inhabitation of the world are aesthetically interconnected. Casting the house as irrelevant allows Kant to narrate a freedom from fear that is unrelated to the concrete place of its embodied habitation. Ethicality in terms of freedom from fear of the present can be focused on the content of inner selves generally in terms of those visible signs that detachment. The one whose judgment is "completely free" can not be assumed to have his ethical content tethered to a house because it is inhering disposition. Ethicality in the world is understood to circulate in terms of stoic detachment and this is historically poeticized to allow for historical potency of the the Christian martyr, the chivalrous warrior and the detached monk while refusing the kind of ethical-historical privilege of women who sabotage oil companies in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The former are figures of a universal ethics; the latter are fighting for a particular natural—i.e., not properly ethical—interest. Because Bachelard focuses on the house as the concrete habitation of survival, the cosmopoetics of survival through this contestation of spatial imagery and its ethicality of the sublime in Bachelard, this opens up possibilities for contemplating a whole different poetics of the spatial and temporal imaginary and a set of ethical possibilities that will be explored in later chapters through

authors of present and place whose thought is yet in no way less cosmopolitan except by poetic exclusion of epidemics of the spatial imaginary.

Through these poetic suppressions of cosmic ethicalities emanating from ecologies of the platial, the Kantian epidemic of the spatial imagery in these aesthetics of judgment sets up the ethicality of judgment's liberation as teleological. It likewise provides constitutionality with its form as linear temporality enacting in the present the possibility for political ethicality's perduration in a Newtonian natural present where political change and transformation can only be conceived in terms of linear progression of stable political objects. The imaginal ethicality of the political present is inscribed through this trajectory toward a futurity that—in order to have political efficacy—must be emotively enacted in the present across a set of poeticized and moralized characters of gender/racial/civilizational/spatial differences; however, it also enacted, in its poetics of singular spatiality and airy topographical heights—the inethicality of place or platial ecology, to use an awkward term. For example the place of the house is refused in favor of the reverie of infinite generalizable space. These imageries are carried over into Kant's political writings not as poetic flourishes. Without some poetic figures who can enact this temporal vision imaginally in the present, time's bifurcation would not produce a political theory of history as linear progression of constitutionally stable objects. This is evident in other theorists where time is bifurcated. In the following interlude we see that in Plotinus and in Augustine, time's bifurcation—occurring as they do in almost exactly the same manner as Kant's aesthetic of time in the first *Critique*—does not produce a progressional linear teleology of history. The reason is that they

poeticize that temporal bifurcation in very different ways. Kant uses these poetic motifs as the method of enacting is singular spatial imaginary of peace as remote to the present but achievable according to a given aesthetic of ethicality distributed in the present. In this regard, Kantian poetics are still epidemic across schools of thought in International Relations: A discursive reading of International Relations literature is rife with the deployment of categories like 'Africa' and 'the developing world' whether in theories of cosmopolitanism, constructivism, realism or institutionalism. These and other motifs often play a critical role in generating spatial and temporal imaginaries that aesthetically distribute capacities for political ethicality and political agency in the future. Nor are the ethical positions that tend to be endorsed with regard to the provisional order and need for objectile linear progression in politics any different from the Kantian spatial and temporal imaginary. It is critical, therefore, to point out that Kantian temporality and spatiality requires an aesthetic of nature poetics to distributed an absent ethicality that is also present but only present as distribution of embodied signs of the moral course toward resolution of ethicality's apparent dislocation from the present.

The result of this poetic imaginary is the impossibility of thinking modes of peace other than through the singular topography of political objects whose objectile stability across linear time—individuated and consistently coherent as juridical objects ideally subject to the form of law described here—requires reverence toward the provisional order of objects insofar as Newtonianly coherent rational templates for inscription by universal morality *qua* order. International relations scholars in large tend to adopt this poetic imaginary in their deployments of 'ontology'—not just professed

Kantians but also realists and institutionalists although they modify the objects but not the linear progression imaginary or *telos*. It is no wonder, therefore, that scholars are having such a difficult time thinking and theorizing peace other than in hopeful teleological terms or in natural ontologically generalizing terms by references to systematicity or a singular order. As the nation-object increasingly defies conformity to the singular linearity of Kantian order, poetics in International Relations is increasingly riddled with references ‘complexes’, ‘multilayeredness’ and ‘regionalism’ as a kind of poetics of ontological order conforming to the poetic imaginary that is the Kantian epidemic of a singular objectile coherence. The problem is that this fends off the problem of ethicality—as the *pragma* peaceability and meliorism in the present—in favor of a hope-inspired teleology of order and linear process that configures the possibility of peace in the present only in those terms and therefore rendering the indeterminacy of the present *pragma*, as affair and its loose ontological connection with the future, in favor of a pragmatism that insists on inscribing the present with an ontologically singular and coherent vision of the future. This ultimately precludes ethical presentism’s relevance for the discipline of International Relations as it is poetically constituted and thereby precludes its openness to presentist dispositions of peace as internationally relevant not in terms of a general theory of a singular peace, but in ways that a poetics of peace and supple dispositions poetically articulated could be rendered as central to International Relations in a manner that enabled their movement across places without subjecting those places to the totalizing vision of peace as spatially enacted.

Today, since one can no longer generalize about Africans racially, one might yet achieve the same poetic effect drawn off in Kant from his state of nature aesthetic by conjuring 'Africa' as a continent or 'the developing world' as a category of the global present's political *qua* ethical problem, one requiring singular resolution. The social imaginary of these poetic images also fix the political implications: the imagining of a possibility for ethicality's persistence into the future is, likewise, an imagining of the distribution of violences that the provisional order might require in order to progress linearly towards the not present but more ethical future. But few who speak of international society and international law are aware that in Burkina Faso the murder rate and other violent crime rates are significantly lower than in Japan or America, and these low crime levels come with a fraction of the police budget and prison system.³⁵ Speaking of 'Africa', as a whole, as lacking in law and institutions is deceptive. But these images/imaginaries poeticize the present in a manner that is necessary for any vision of political time to bear a singular linear progressive course in the present in the way of an 'international theory of peace'. These images, thereby, provide the aesthetic contours for

³⁵ "According to the INTERPOL data, for murder, the rate in 1998 was 0.38 per 100,000 population for Burkina Faso, 1.10 for Japan, and 6.3 for USA. For rape, the rate in 1998 was .24 for Burkina Faso, compared with 1.48 for Japan and 34.4 for USA. For robbery, the rate in 1998 was .04 for Burkina Faso, 2.71 for Japan, and 165.2 for USA. For aggravated assault, the rate in 1998 was 1.77 for Burkina Faso, 15.40 for Japan, and 360.5 for USA. For burglary, the rate in 1998 was .17 for Burkina Faso, 187.93 for Japan, and 862.0 for USA." From San Diego State University's "Crime and Society: a Comparative Criminology of the Tour of the World" website: http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/rwinslow/africa/burkina_faso.html, Accessed December, 13 2015. These statistics from 1998 were published around the same time when Francis Fukuyama published his infamous "End of History" essay in *Foreign Affairs* in which he actually wrote that he does not care at all what crazy political ideas people are thinking up in Burkina Faso. This just a decade after the most popular President in all of Africa, President Thomas Sankara, was assassinated in a coup for which Bernard Doza in *Liberté Confisquée* produces documentary evidence that the French government assisted and supported. The political gain of his assassination for many stake-holders was evident since Thomas Sankara was trying to consolidate African support for refusing to pay African international debts. Seven years later all of West Africa was slammed with an imposed 50% devaluation of their currency from which the regional economy has yet to recover. And this devaluation was also assisted by the French government in consultation with the IMF and the post-Sankara Burkinabé government.

distributing perceptions of capacity for ethicality as teleological ‘vocation’, but then this aesthetic of ‘vocation’ can only be imagined in the form of *exceptionality from the world present*, and in poetically rendering this as such—as both evidence of ethicality’s insufficient presence in the present as world, and as evidence of the possibility for imagining ethicality’s projection into the future as world future—ethicality’s projection into that future can only ever be imagined as *world future of the present’s exception*.

Monastic philosopher as social martyr of the ethical future and Arcadian shepherd as the object of toleration in the present. This is a fair condensation of Kantian hospitality. Additionally, it must be added, the shepherd is ethically disciplinable according the threat that a shepherd seeking to spatially aestheticize poeticize or enact his vision of ethicality—this in order to survive in a world ethically disposed to the multiple temporalities and spatialities that such a life’s requires be politically afforded the means of negotiation—would, in Kant’s political morality be manifestly imaginal morphing by the shepherd into his alternate, not the premodern by the anti-modern—the violent savage. Kant’s exceptionalism may not be the only possible poetic rendering of exceptionalism available, but his spatial and temporal imaginary lays the ground for exceptionalism as such. By imaging the distance between lamentable present and ethical future as connected by a singular linear trajectory; this connection likewise becomes the stage of violence’s anticipated distribution under anxieties of the possibility for ethicality’s projection into the singular future.

II. First Interlude: Plotinus and Augustine on the Bifurcation of Time

Time is a garment so be of its fabric — و الدهر اثواب فكن في ثيابه —
With a day as its cloak it gathers together كلبسته يوما اخذ و حلق
— Sidi al Mukhtar al Kunti ³⁶

In his chapter, “Eternity and Time”, Plotinus begins by saying, “Eternity (*aion*) and time (*chronos*) are two different things, the one belonging to the sphere of nature which lasts for ever, the other to becoming and to this manifold.”³⁷ As the title suggests, temporality here is bifurcated through the juxtaposition of ‘*chronos*’ with ‘*aion*’—literally, ‘always being’. Plotinus, however, maintains that the literal meaning of *aion*—‘always being’—is misleading; this is because eternity has no past or future but is the persistent unity of present life. Therefore ‘always’ is deceptive because it implies a ‘before’ and an ‘after’; whereas, *aion* consists in no such progression.³⁸ Plotinus’s theory of time is, therefore, radically different from Kant’s. While his description of *chronos* as a power interior to the psyche—i.e. not properly inhering in the world of things—is strikingly similar to Kant’s aesthetic of time; yet this all-encompassing temporal alternative in the form of *aion* is radically different from Kant’s *telos*. The poetic imagery that enacts this alternative temporality has important implications for Plotinus’s political imaginary as

³⁶ Sidi al Mukhtar ibn Ahmed al Kunti *Risalah fi ikhmad al fitan bayn al qaba’il* Ms. 13.

³⁷ All citations of Plotinus and of Porphyry’s biography are from the seven volume corpus of Plotinus issued by the Leob Classical Library series and translated by Arthur Hilary Armstrong: Plotinus (1966) *Plotinus I-VII*. trans. Arthur H. Armstrong. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. I have modified Armstrong’s translation in some places. Citations reference the volume number and the pagination as follows: Plotinus trans. Armstrong, III 301.

³⁸ *ibid.* III 315

was the case with Kant. For Kant, freedom is intuited as freedom from present nature of object/instinct behavior, and this dislocation demands a distant *telos* as the only ground for an individual to express its moral value through its intuited freedom—the universal can only be found in a remote future. But in Plotinus, it is impossible to dislocate the individual *telos* into the future. “Temperance” over “eagerness” is what Plotinus’s temporal bifurcation produces as an ethical disposition, and this disposition emanates from a very different concept of nature; here nature is life (*zôon*) connecting the temporality of phenomenological progression with the eternity of nature’s effluent presence.

Plotinus walks a fine line that Plato did not have to walk because of the challenge that Plotinus’s Gnostic and Manichean contemporaries posed in their disparaging of the material world. Plotinus’s theory and its refusal to espouse these other positions can only be understood in reference to his theory of time. The theory of time presented in Plotinus is robust and distinct from Plato’s relatively incomplete theory of time in the *Timaeus* and that of Aristotle’s in his *Physics*.³⁹ To understand why Plotinus’s view of the world as imperfect does not lapse into a hylomorphic lament of matter’s baseness requires examining the alternative temporal condition of the intelligible realms—*aion*—in the context of Plotinus’s presentism of emanation. With this theory of time, Plotinus admits that the embodied life is dependent upon the intelligible realm (the noetic), but he refuses the position that this world is somehow inherently evil and worthy of sheer disregard. The noetic may be dislocated from the temporal in terms of its absolute unity

³⁹ See, for the comparison, Andrew Smith (1996) “Eternity and Time” in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*. ed. Lloyd Gerson. Cambridge University Press, 196-216.

and consistency, as given under its temporal mantle of eternity, but this is only a partial dislocation. Because the *psyche* has access to the noetic element of its being. Eternal Being is wholly present in the cosmic manifold but psychically apparent as a fragmented image of it; thereby nature maintains the imperfect coherence of this life through its emanation from the intellect of eternity.

[Eternity] is something which abides in the same in itself and does not change at all but is always in the present, because nothing of it has passed away, nor again is there anything to come into being, but that which it is, it is; so that eternity is not the substrate but something which, as it were, shines out from the substrate itself in respect of what is called its sameness, in speaking about the fact that it is not going to be but is already, that it is as it is and not otherwise, for what could come to be for it afterwards, which it is not already? [...] But one must not think that eternity has come to that [intelligible] nature accidentally, from outside, but it is that nature, and from it and with it.⁴⁰

The unity of the psyche flows from the intelligible realm and offers an image of the cosmos unity within ourselves as intellect's freedom from pure aesthetic progression of time, a feature very akin to Kant's sublime except that nature is never given in teleological terms. But here there is an absolute temporal proximity which precludes the possibility of referring nature's purpose to linear time.

All things exist in something else, and, since *there is nothing between*, because of their closeness to something else in the realm of real being something like an imprint and image of that other suddenly appears.⁴¹

Consequently in contrast to the Gnostics and Manicheans, the impurity of embodied life is a function of the *psyche's* temporal excess and not of matter's

⁴⁰ *ibid.* III 305

⁴¹ *ibid.* V 259, my italics

incorrigible baseness. The soul's eagerness to experience its own individuated temporality needs to be treated because it is a moral problem. To understand this requires looking at his theory of aesthetic progressive time—*chronos*— as the temporal condition for the *psyche*'s individuation.

Because *psyche* had an unquiet power, which wanted to keep on transferring what it was there [i.e. in the intelligible realm] to something else, it did not want the whole to be present to it all together; and, as from a quiet seed the formative principle (*ho logos*), unfolding itself, advances, as it thinks, to largeness, but does away with the largeness by division and, instead of keeping its unity in itself, squanders (*dapanôn*)⁴² it outside itself and so goes forward toward a weaker extension (*mâkos*)^{43, 44}

A seed-like individuation produces a self-unity coagulating⁴⁵ in the body as an elemental presence of an intellectual realm that is fragmented in the production of chronological individuations. Yet these individuations are all still connected with the presence of the divine realm such as constitutes the temporal continuity of the *psyche* and the intellectual coherence of objects through formal apparitions. But as the condition for individuation, *chronos* came about due the *psyche*'s "unquiet power (*dynamis oukh haesukhos*)" as manifest from a "quiet seed". *Chronos* is the temporal condition for—and temporality's response to—the *psyche*'s disquiet prodigality. In the previous passage, the *psyche* takes up chronological time by its power as a kind of natural right to "squander".

⁴² literally 'expends' or 'uses up'

⁴³ literally 'distance' or 'length'

⁴⁴ *ibid.* III 339

⁴⁵ Plotinus often uses the language of composite, but the example of gold ore as the metaphor for the *psyche*'s composition suggests that coagulation is also fitting. See *ibid.* V 247

[*Psyche*] put itself into time, which it made instead of eternity, and then handed over that which came into being as a slave to time, by making the whole of it exist in time and encompassing all its ways with time. For since the world of sense moves in *psyche*—there is no other place of it (this universe) than *psyche*.⁴⁶

Like Corbin's *Imago mundi*, progressive time—*chronos*—is an image of eternity that the *psyche*, intending this image of eternity for its own self, finds itself enslaved by. The soul's experience began with power and ended in feebleness—in the squandering of all-present existence in favor of a continual progression that cannot sustain itself; this is the prodigality of a seed that wants to experience each thing separately or differently—i.e. without its connection to everything else. But in this mode, things can only be impermanent. Plotinus is presenting the doctrine of entropy. In terms of generative nature, Plotinus's reference to seeds should be seen more as a quantum enactment of aggregating forms than akin with the Atomists vision with which he disagrees.⁴⁷ For Plotinus, such a radical emanationist position requires these intelligible forms in order to produce an account of the stability of many things in the world in the world. Therefore, the world must bear the interlacing of a connection with intellect (*nous*) so as to produce an all-present consistency to the present and likewise of the world's permanence. In a manifold of seed-like multiplicity and temporally individuated potencies that borders on a quantum-like emanationism, the stability of things can only be drawn from elsewhere. Therefore, elemental forms and other forms upon these will face entropy as

⁴⁶ *ibid.* III 340-1

⁴⁷ *ibid.* II 121, Plotinus disagrees with the Atomists because he says 'every body is altogether divisible'; therefore, the atom cannot be a fundamental unit or particle because it to has constituents.

alternative modalities come into being; in other words, their ensouled individuated experiences of progressive time and its exhaustive nature dictate this entropy.

All the universe is held fast by forms from beginning to end: matter first of all by the forms of the elements, and then other forms upon these and then again others; so that it is difficult to find matter hidden under so many forms. The matter too is a sort of ultimate form.⁴⁸

Therefore, Plotinus's objection to Gnostic and Manichean despairing of the material world and the body is based on a theory of time that is completely novel. His theory of matter comes to mirror his theory of the aggregated psyche as partially intellect bearing and partially sense-bearing. There is a plasticity to the psyche, therefore—a malleability—since it has this intelligible element in it that is connected with the principle of connection itself. Matter becomes an equally plastic reflection of this because it bears these same features. Plotinus's elevation of the intellectual aspect of the self becomes the site whereby an image of matter may be celebrated for its absorptive capabilities.

We should not in every case despise the undefined or anything of which the very idea implies shapelessness, if it is going to offer itself to the principles before it and to the best beings. *Psyche*, for instance, is naturally disposed like this to Intellect and Reason; it is shaped by them and brought to a better form. [...] The matter, too, of the things that came into being is always receiving different forms, but the matter of eternal things is always the same and always has the same form. With matter here, it is pretty well exactly the other way around; for here it is all the things in turn and only one thing at each particular time; so nothing lasts because one thing pushes out another; so it is not the same for ever. But the intelligible matter is all things at once; so it has nothing to change into, for it has all things already.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ *ibid.* V 259

⁴⁹ *ibid.* II 109-10

Matter in the intelligible realm of forms is the substance capable of being all at once. Whereas here for things to differentiate and appear different, matter must conceal the all-else of its potential; it must become darkness, or dark matter as it were.

Intellect finds out its doubleness, for it divides until it comes to something simples which cannot itself be resolved into parts; but as long as it can it advances into the depth of body. And the depth of each individual thing is matter: so all matter is dark, because the light [in each thing] is the rational forming principle. Now intellect too is rational principle. So intellect sees the forming principle in each thing and considers that what is under it is dark because it lies below the light; just as the eye, which has the form of light, directs its gaze at the light and at colors (which are lights) and reports that what lies below the colors is dark and material, hidden by the colors. [...] That which underlies form There is substance, or rather, considered along with the form imposed upon it, it makes a whole which is illuminated substance.⁵⁰

The embodied life came about because the soul wanted its own individuated all. It wanted to experience all things differently. Matter's darkness 'here' is just a second-order effect that is a requisite feature enabling *psyche's* temporal individuation; this is because since everything exists in the intelligible realm as inseparable and all-being without division. Experiencing difference here and one thing at a time requires that all the rest—differentiation across forms in matter's capacity for receptivity—be veiled in darkness; otherwise this world disappears into the intelligible all of sameness illuminated. The *psyche*-seed comes into being because it wants it all differently—without the sameness aspect. Therefore, *psyche* no longer has access the all sameness of being in the intelligible realm, and the dark appearance of matter is the price that it pays for its chronological individuation that it enacts on itself.

⁵⁰ *ibid.* II 114-5

Therefore together with a life as different, this 'different' has a different time.⁵¹

That we become a slave to this chronological aesthetic temporality in the world—i.e., that we cannot control its progression as we may like—is because the psychical life is always emanating from the essential realm that we no longer properly possess. This means that freedom of the intellect for Plotinus is merely the possibility that we all have to pursue contemplation of the image of nature's wholeness. In principle, he posits his disagreement with Gnostics and Manicheans by insisting that this world 'here' is not to be despaired of. The *Psyche* still has the means to imaginally reach the beautiful unity of the cosmos and of nature even if it is as a secondary image and prone to entropy in the imagination. Philosophy will help us keep the connection close. Reading how Plotinus describes matter in the realm of being as substance that is pure illumination helps understand the importance of the imagery in Plotinus's chapter "On Intelligible Beauty". Sara Rappe calls this passage a "visualization exercise" where Plotinus asks his reader to "conceive of the cosmos as transparent".⁵²

[The gods] see all things, not those to which coming to be belongs, but those to which real being belongs, and they see themselves in other things; for all things There are transparent, and there is nothing dark or opaque; everything and all things are clear to the inmost part to everything; for light is transparent to light. Each There has everything in itself and sees all things in every other, so that all are everywhere and each and every one is all and the glory is unbounded; for each of them is great, because even the small is great; the sun there is is all the

⁵¹ *ibid.* III 341

⁵² Sara Rappe (1996) "Self-knowledge and subjectivity in the *Ennead*" in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*. ed. Lloyd Gerson. Cambridge University Press, 260.

stars, and each star is the sun and all the others. A different kind of being stands out in each, but in each all are manifest.⁵³

This visualization exercise imagines a fully illuminated cosmos of intelligible beings in absolute proximity with this one—emanating through this one. However, the divine realm is present in this life but only partially accessible through internal contemplation and imaginal work. This temporal refutation of Gnosticism is genius, but readers of Plotinus must wonder whether Plotinus was ever totally able to deal with matter and the body emotionally—in short, were these philosophical-poet contemplations enough? Porphyry's biography of Plotinus opens by telling us that he was a philosopher who "seemed ashamed of being in a body".⁵⁴ Hadot's book on Plotinus will provocatively choose to open with this exact problem of his body.⁵⁵ Elsewhere in Plotinus's chapter, "On Matter", Plotinus refers to matter 'here' as "a decorated corpse".⁵⁶ Porphyry's biography also tells us that he suffered from a bowel sickness but would not give himself medical enemas because he did not feel it was dignified. This beautiful philosophy directed at defending the illuminations of this plenorum for what it is against the Gnostic and Manichean movement conducts a theory of bifurcated time that is philosophically absorbing and novel, but even Plotinus seemed to know at times that something more than philosophy was needed. Porphyry came to be dogged with thoughts of suicide despite achieving his aim of excelling in philosophy

⁵³ Plotinus trans. Armstrong, V 249

⁵⁴ *ibid.* I 3

⁵⁵ Pierre Hadot (1993) *Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision*. trans. Michael Chase. University of Chicago Press, 23.

⁵⁶ Plotinus trans. Armstrong II 115

to the level of Plotinus's choice student. He never told Plotinus of his depression, but Plotinus sensed it. Plotinus approached him and told him that the melancholy he was suffering from was just a bilious sickness and that he should leave Rome.⁵⁷ In short, Go! See the world! Find a beautiful place! Porphyry left and would never see Plotinus again.

Plotinus had experienced something quite similar on one or two occasions, but there are few details in his biography. After Plotinus first began studying philosophy in Alexandria at the age of twenty-eight, he wound up in a state of sadness and despair. It was relieved only when he found his teacher, Ammonius, with whom he then studied for eleven years until the age of thirty-nine. Little is known about Ammonius. But after eleven years with Ammonius, Plotinus takes leave, with Ammonius's blessing, to go to Persia and India to meet the great philosophical masters there. In short, Plotinus's own life story seems to suggest that there was something that philosophy as contemplation alone could not fulfill. One needed to move in the world even if it was for the sake of meeting other philosophers in an 'over there' that was more vivid than his 'there' of eternity's visualization. What might Plotinus have been thinking when he recognized that look of depression from his favorite student and realized that no new teaching that he could offer him would cure it? What would it have felt like for Plotinus in his old age to know that this philosophy that Porphyry had studied so diligently was not enough for him, and that poeticizing and imagining the cosmos could not manage this depression? Plotinus too had once needed to go elsewhere and see otherwise. To what degree did Plotinus feel he and his teachings were potentially at fault for Porphyry's

⁵⁷ *ibid.* I 37

state? did he feel like he had fallen short of his master Ammonius who cured his depression? Either way, it suggests that Plotinus felt that his own philosophy was not quite enough to cure it. It is unlikely he would have seen Porphyry's depression as a mere coincidence.

The best way to understand why is to look not at Plotinus's discomfort with his body, but also his discomfort in the language of philosophy. And this bears consequences for Plotinus's moral thought. Plotinus appears to occupy something like the position—the between position— of a translator in the sense that a translator is always modifying the language into which he is translating—always grappling with the insufficiency of the language to convey the image. Plotinus was a translator of philosophy, not out of one language and into another, but rather in the sense of the Latin word for translation, *conversare*, or to turn over. The Latin word *translatio*—to carry across—from whence we derive the Romance understanding of the word translation, did not come to have the meaning of translating from one language to another until the Middle Ages after Latin and Greek worlds had bifurcated the Mediterranean under alternative ecclesiastical orders. Plotinus's translating from a between space that had to modify the language, dialogue and in turn the imaginary; his imagery was intent on exposing at once another side of things, an interior of things, an underneath of things—it meant turning over or around—*con verso*. He was always crafting an image rather than an axiom because language was not enough as it was.

The wise men of Egypt, I think, also understood this, either by scientific or innate knowledge, and when they wished to signify something wisely, did not use the forms of letters which follow the order of words and propositions and

imitate sounds and enunciations of philosophical statements (*axiomata*), but by drawing images and inscribing in their temples one particular image of each particular thing, the manifested the non-discursive of the intelligible world, that is, that every image is a kind of knowledge and wisdom and is a subject of statements, all together in one, and not discourse (*dianoesis*) or deliberation (*bouleusis*).⁵⁸

Plotinus seems to require the poet in his polis as much as his philosophy required the poetic image. Even if Plotinus's political vision was in the form of his unrealized philosopher city which he called Platonopolis, it is evident that this may not have resembled the polis of Plato's *Republic*; it is particularly unlikely that Plotinus would have ever seen poets and dramatists as unwelcome in Plotinus's philosopher city.⁵⁹ Likewise, his disciple Porphyry appears to have had a penchant for poetic and religious imagery in his philosophical writings, for which Plotinus publicly congratulated him.

At Plato's feast I, [Porphyry], read a poem, "The Sacred Marriage"; and because much in it was expressed in the mysterious and veiled language of inspiration someone said, "Porphyry is mad." But Plotinus said, so as to be heard by all, "You have shown yourself at once a poet, philosopher and expounder of sacred mysteries." The rhetorician Diophanes read a defense of Alcibiades in Plato's 'Symposium' in which he asserted that a pupil for the sake of advancing in the study of virtue should submit himself to the carnal intercourse with his master if the master desired it. Plotinus repeatedly started up to leave the meeting, but restrained himself, and after the end of the lecture gave me, Porphyry, the task of writing a refutation. Diophanes refused to lend me his manuscript, and I depended in writing my refutation on my memory of his arguments. When I read it before the same assembled hearers I pleased Plotinus

⁵⁸ *ibid.* V 257

⁵⁹ Hadot (1993) 99 ft. 10

so much that he kept on quoting during the meeting [from the Iliad], "So strike and be a light to men."⁶⁰

The metaphor of the Egyptian iconography as superior to discursive dialogue and the image of Plotinus as a translator must also be considered in light of the apparent difficulties that Plotinus had with the language. We are told that his spelling was very bad, and he struggled in his pronunciation of long words.

In the meetings of the school he showed an adequate command of language and the greatest power of discovering and considering what was relevant to the subject at hand, but he made mistakes in certain words: he did not say *anamimnesketai* but *anamnesisketai* and made slips which he also constantly committed in his writing.⁶¹

In the philosophical milieus of the third century Greco-Roman world with its focus on demonstrative airs and high-flown rhetorical effluence, it is not surprising that Plotinus was often considered something of a hack.

People in his own time thought that he was making a show on a basis of plagiarism from Numenius, but also that they considered he was a big driveller and despised him because they did not understand what he meant.⁶²

Plotinus's philosophy was never at home in the language of philosophical poetics that dominated many circles in the Roman world, and this, in a way, mirrored how he never quite felt at ease in a body. The language was always insufficient to the image. Discursive thought did not require more precision but rather something to fill it with meaning, some inspiration to come into it.

⁶⁰ Plotinus trans. Armstrong I 43

⁶¹ *ibid.* I 39

⁶² *ibid.* I 49-51

He puts things shortly and abounds more in ideas (*noaema*) than in words; he generally expresses himself in a tone of rapt inspiration, and states what he himself feels about the matter and not what has been handed down by tradition.⁶³

The 'end' or *telos* in Plotinus could not properly be dislocated from the present. It is the nature of the discursive that the discursive might fail to achieve the image, but the image is always there, always present and possible. Likewise, for the moral end, it is always present. All it requires is attentiveness to the internal cultivation of an image of the unity in things that mirrors the unity of the eternal from whence all things here emanate through nature. Therefore, neither the divine nature coursing through things nor the manifold of appearances could properly be understood as oriented in a linear fashion. Thinking just in terms of Plotinus's visualization exercises, these images destabilize a vision of things that looks in one direction—seeing forward but not backward the chronological self gains its linear orientation from the obscurity that lurks behind it and within it. Plotinus's ethical *telos* requires vision in panorama in order to undo linearity. Likewise, the poetic image undoes the linear confines of discursive thought.

The order of the world [i.e. its roundness and central location in the celestial sphere] is not the result of following out a train of logical consequences and purposive thought; it is before consequential and purposive thinking; for all this comes later, reasoning, demonstration and the confidence [produced by them]. For since it is a principle, all these follow immediately and just as they do; and in this sense it is well said that we should not enquire into the reason why of a principle, and of a principle like this, the perfect one, which is the same as the goal (*telos*), is the whole all together and is without deficiency.⁶⁴

⁶³ *ibid.* I 39-41

⁶⁴ *ibid.* V 261-3

The goal is already present. And yet what can be understood by Plotinus's idea for a philosopher city? This prolific philosopher wanted to build Platonopolis. Not surprisingly, the Emperor in Rome never endorsed the idea. Outside of this political ambition, his view of politics bordered on indifference/disdain.⁶⁵ No doubt, he imagined that the political world might be otherwise than it currently had become in Rome. His entourage consisted largely of doctors senators and poets, men and women alike. As Hadot notes, this was not the all-male Academy in Athens.⁶⁶ But what was the moral political objective that he called Platonopolis? Was it to show people how the political could be? Therefore, failing to realize this philosopher city, was Plotinus's view that politics was to be avoided by the philosopher in the same way that Plotinus would have avoided the body or discursive language if he could so do?

The best way to proceed in this regard is to give a picture of what law would have meant for Plotinus. On the one hand, his contemplative ethics focused on the cosmic unity and the *psyche's* transience. On the other hand, his linguistic disposition mirrored his emanationist spatial portrayal of nature whereby an image-like inspiration grounds itself in the conjured image of the ethical whole infused into thought and discourse with a life-unity of imaginally forceful ethicality akin to the seed-like self's chronological power play of inception. What could law have been then for this imagined Platonopolis? This question will be picked up shortly after a brief interlude within this interlude into Augustine's philosophical relationship to Plotinus.

⁶⁵ See Plotinus's interest in diverting his friend Zethus, an Arab doctor, from Zethus' continued involvement in the affairs of state: *ibid.* I 27

⁶⁶ Hadot (1993) 54

The Interlude Within

Around 400 CE, before the sack of Rome during the Donatist suppression and after the destruction of the pagan shrines in 399 CE in Augustine's North Africa, Peter Brown describes the position of Augustine's church as 'peripheral' to the lives of the vast majority of its congregants.⁶⁷ Augustine's movement had been largely confined to the larger Latinized cities of Hippo and Carthage, but in large across the North African landscape, Augustine's devotees had remained limited to a small segmentary vanguard, but things looked differently, as Peter Brown describes, the scene following the pagan persecution and the shutting down of Donatist churches.

There stood another group, the solid, immovable mass of *paenitentes*, the 'penitents', who had been excluded from communion by the rigorous penitential discipline of the African church. They showed no inclination to submit themselves again to the high demands of the Christian life.⁶⁸

Augustine had supported the violent imperial destruction of the Donatist church—somewhat problematically regarding his early positions in his writings on the power of love. Prior to its disbanding, the Donatists had been the most influential church bearing deep roots in Africa with its schismatic tendencies in relation to the imperial patriarchies of Constantinople and Rome.⁶⁹ However, Augustine had not been without reservation about forced conversion to his church. On the one hand, his opposition to the Donatist church was clear cut rivalry and pursuit of political power.

⁶⁷ Peter Brown (2000) *Augustine of Hippo*. University of California Press, 243.

⁶⁸ *ibid.* 245

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 132

On the other hand, he recognized that with the forced conversion of the Donatists and their devotees, devotion in his own church would no doubt suffer as these insincere converts were forced into it.⁷⁰ He had seen this before under the pagan persecutions. But the core doctrinal disagreement between Augustine and the Donatists is of key importance because it reflects a divergence in the metaphysical form of the religious “law” as applied politically and poetically in terms of temporality. The anti-hierarchical position of the Donatist church saw each church as an autonomous ark or vessel for the preservation of the holy law. For Augustine this was misguided and the equivalent of settling for the “old Israel”.⁷¹

Augustine drew extensively from Plotinus to construct his metaphysics of ethics and politics was Augustine. Augustine—like Plotinus before him and as Kant would later—described a temporal bifurcation. But Augustine would differ from Plotinus in his earlier work in one critical respect that Brown describes.

In his sermons as in his *Confessions*, we meet Augustine as the authentic follower of Plotinus. Faced by a similar popular view of the religious life among his fellow-pagans, Plotinus also had turned inwards. He had insisted that the ‘ascent’ of the soul was not, crudely, a physical journey from the demon-haunted world to the pure light of the Milky Way, but that it involved the realization of some latent principle within the inner world. Plotinus, of course, reached a diametrically opposite conclusion from Augustine on the nature of this inner principle: what for Plotinus was the divine within the soul itself, becomes for Augustine, Christ, a principle separate from the soul, a principle, that is, not only ‘deeper than my inmost being’ but also ‘high above my highest peak’. Both men stand out together, against the background of the current of religious ideas of their age. And what Plotinus had struggled to convey to a select classroom in

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 230

⁷¹ *ibid.* 216

Rome, the Christians of Hippo and Carthage could hear any Sunday in the sermons of Augustine.⁷²

Therefore, if we consider the third century Neoplatonist vision of the law of the divine city as opposed to Augustine's totalizing impersonal law, we get a sense for why the Donatist movement would have had such traction in North Africa and why, outside of the wealthy Latinized port cities of Carthage and Hippo, Augustine's church had a difficult time establishing itself among the masses. And why even in these rich Latin cities the message of Augustine was adopted in a very limited fashion.

The Donatist presentation of the law and the church—its locality and anti-hierocratic position—can be juxtaposed with the form of law that Augustine is communicating for his church—law as both imperial law and the law of a singular universal church. The law of the Platonic philosopher and the Donatist had a great deal in common; they were the law of city and not of empire. And the best laws were drawn from religious practice and communal *oikonomos*; therefore, the law takes the form of an order over a disorder that is revealed to be a vision of health/healing/therapeutic. This made sense in Donatist terms. The rural communities in North Africa whose grain had for centuries been exported to feed Roman urban centers and military outfits across the Mediterranean would have been comfortable with a Donatist vision of Christianity that fell in line with an anti-hierocratic locally outfitted understanding of the Christian order. Donatist rebellion suggests in the fourth century, like the Circumcellions before it and, again after Augustine, with the Kharijite movement that spurred the mass defection

⁷² *ibid.* 241

and break up of the Byzantine empire in North Africa. In short, the Plotinian worldview stripped of its vision of the soul's bifurcation as plenorum in intellect and rendered by Augustine as a radical displacement and dislocation of the divine from the temporal world, a radical dislocation that Augustine insisted upon but appeared, prior to the sack of Rome and even subsequently, to have had limited poetic traction and to have required militarized imperial backing for the violent purging of alternative shrines and practice from the North African social landscape.

Given Augustine's marginal political significance until Pope Innocent III's ethnic cleansing of southern France under the longest and most horrific crusade in history, the Albigensian Crusade and Innocent's reimagining of canon law as guided by Augustine and instituted by the Clooniac monks through the Investiture controversy with the politics of sabotaging European secular rulers, territorial consolidation in what Mark Pegg has described as a genocide in southern France in the 13th century;⁷³ perhaps the best way to characterize the limited appeal of Augustine's movement in North Africa, and to emphasize the persistent attentiveness to the *pathae* and to the present as it is lived with a possibility for ethical space and healing that the people demanded of their public space such that it required that space be imagined other than through a dislocated *telos*, would be to cite Ellen Amster's research in Fez and the importance there of the shrine to al Jilani in Morocco—a saint whose ethics of the purification of the heart bear a great deal of similarity with the Plotinian imaginary.

⁷³ Mark Gregory Pegg (2008) *A Most Holy War: The Albigensian Crusade and the Battle for Christendom*. Oxford University Press.

The people repeatedly clashed with the Fez *qadi* (judge) Muhammad al-'Arabi Burdala over "visiting" al-Jilani. Pilgrims attributed a pillar of the Qarawani mosque to al-Jilani and left him offerings there, until the *qadi* had the pillar destroyed in order to prevent "heresy." Al-Kattani also protested "[al-Jilani] ... never entered Morocco ... So how is it possible that it is said he reached the city of Fez and worshipped God in some of its places?" [...] But the people's prayers ultimately triumphed over scholars and judges in the urban space. The people washed themselves at a collecting drain in Tiyaliyyin street asking al-Jilani for cure, and today there is a grave and shrine for al-Jilani in Fez; there is now a grave and prayer-place (*khulwa*) for his soul to inhabit.⁷⁴

The Albigensian Crusade of Pope Innocent III was largely directed at practices much like these. And it was in this context that Innocent moved the papacy to Lyon and founded the University there for the purpose of the study of heresiology. If it was this same pope who canonized Augustine as a political and legal theorist, it bears some mention that Augustine's political movement did not survive the fragmentation of the Roman empire until Innocent's genocidal policies in Europe implemented them. Plotinus and Augustine lived a very different Rome empires—more different than the single century that separated them would suggest. Plotinus's world one hundred years before the empire really started to falter almost could have never imagined the collapse that Augustine lived in his lifetime with Rome's collapse and its refugees pouring into North Africa from the shores of Italy and being driven into Augustine's parishes.

After the sack of Rome by Alaric, North Africa becomes the destination for a huge number of refugees and the power center of the extant Roman empire under. *City of God* is written by Augustine to defend his church against the accusation from a

⁷⁴ Ellen Amster (2013) *Medicine and the Saints: Science, Islam, and the Colonial Encounter in Morocco, 1877-1956*. University of Texas Press, 35.

broadly pagan population of refugees from the Italian peninsula that the Christianization and neglect of the old gods is what led to the downfall of Rome as vengeance by the gods. Augustine's earlier version of the faith is modified in *City of God* in an attempt to satisfy all the Roman refugees or significantly change the religious landscape of North Africa other than through military force. It seems that Augustine's poetics of time did not have the imaginal traction in North Africa that the scope of his political project demanded. He required miracles be part of the faith and saintly shrines; this was an about turn and concession to these relics of pagan practice. As Ramsay Macmullen shows, saintly miracles become the kind of assimilation of an older insistence on healing and religious as therapeutic and focused on the present.⁷⁵ It now makes sense why he does an about turn later in life in his focus on miracles and saintly instances of healing. These miracles—and almost all of them are cases of healing—were the most important means of conversion in early Christianity. Therefore, Augustine, in the absence of a compelling imaginal scope for his temporal bifurcation of ethicality in the present world, goes from writing in his early life against saintly miracles to later, in the period of his writing *City of God*, compiling a whole compendium of miraculous cases tied to Catholic saints in North Africa.⁷⁶

Augustine maintained so much of Plotinus's thought in his own works and yet that Augustine casts the moral objective so far afield paints all the more vivid an

⁷⁵ Ramsay MacMullen (1997) *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Century*. Yale University Press.

⁷⁶ See Augustine (2003) *City of God* trans. Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin Press, Book XXII 24, 1047. On Augustine's earlier position regarding saintly miracles see Peter Brown (2000) "When Augustine wrote *On True Religion* in 390, he had stated, explicitly, that miracles such as had happened in the times of the Apostles were no longer allowed to take place (419)." For a discussion of Augustine's flip-flopping and the social exigencies that necessitated see *ibid.* 416-421.

impression of what Plotinus may have seen in the Gnostic movement that he parted ways with it, happy to have found the mentorship of Ammonius. Perhaps the best way to conclude this interlude within is to offer again Peter Brown's description of what critically appears to have been the one element that summarizes the entirely radical poetic departure of Augustinian time from the philosopher whose thought inspired that temporal bifurcation in Augustine to be articulated as such in the first place.

Augustine's extraordinary capacity to construct from his reading of Neo-Platonic material an entirely new sense of the inner life of the individual was achieved at a cost. He allowed the Platonic sense of the majesty of the *cosmos* to grow pale. Lost in the narrow and ever fascinating labyrinth of his preoccupation with the human will [...], Augustine turned his back on the *mundus*, on the magical beauty associated with the material universe in later Platonism. That 'great city of gods and men' was a world suffused with spirit and crowded with rank upon rank of invisible, loving presences. It remained always on the margin of Augustine's thought. He was, of course, convinced that the order of the *mundus* reminded human beings of the wisdom and power of their Creator. But Augustine would never look up at the stars and gaze at the world around him with the shudder of religious awe that fell upon Plotinus when he exclaimed '*pas de ho khôros hieros*': 'All the place is holy' (as Oedipus had exclaimed at Colonus, and as Jacob had done at Bethel: *Surely the Lord is in this place*. [Gen. 28:16]). Plotinus went on to write of the *cosmos*: 'and there is nothing in it which is without a share of soul.' Augustine pointedly refused to share this enthusiasm. He viewed the Platonic notion of a World Soul, a majestic *anima mundi* that gave life and vividness to the entire realm of nature, as an uninteresting and basically unnecessary speculation: if such an entity existed at all, all that mattered was that it should not be worshipped instead of God. That was all that needed to be said on the matter. Something was lost, in Western Christianity, by this trenchant and seemingly commonsensical judgement.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Peter Brown, 504

Concluding and Going Forward

What vision of law would Plotinus have intended for Platonopolis in light of his presentist temporal lens and emanational spatial imaginary? There was a reason why the Emperor never offered to give Plotinus his polis in Campania. There was obviously money behind the project we have record of how many rich orphans and wealthy well-connected people—doctors, poets, and senators—were around Plotinus. And they obviously demonstrated a liking for a certain poetic and professional way of life that was also challenging in its pursuit of intellectual discourse. Was Platonopolis just a frivolous political idea? Or was it a philosopher's way of looking at something that was an old idea and seeing it as the only thing he could imagine would change Rome? Was he trying to institute a kind of separation of powers with regards to the empire. Separation of power is really the wrong image? Is he trying to dislocate something?

Iamblichus'—a neo-Platonian contemporary and student of Porphyry—writes, in his biography of Pythagoras,

For cities are only magnified households, so the arrangement of domestic concern is the principle of all good order in cities. [...] Besides this household justice, [Pythagoras] added another and most beautiful kind, the legislative, which both orders what to do and what not to do. Legislative justice is more beautiful than the judicial kind, resembling medicine which heals the diseased, but differs in this that it is preventative, planning the health of the soul from afar.⁷⁸

This imaginary of the law-giver as like a healer is probably similar to how Plotinus would have looked at the philosopher city. Hadot has pointed to the centrality

⁷⁸ Iamblichus (2012) *Life of Pythagoras*. Nabu Press, 122.

of therapeutics and medical knowledge of the body in ancient philosophy.⁷⁹ And Porphyry's biography suggests that this holds absolutely for Plotinus's school. Porphyry says that when he heard from Eustochius of Plotinus's death, a snake slithered away as Plotinus breathed his last breath. The snake had important connections with the shrines of healing and the like. But spatially and imaginally for Iamblichus and likewise for Plotinus, laws never really extended beyond the city. They would never enact a future development of the world. At best the city became a place for healing in the way that Hadot shows how ancient philosophy was connected with the science of spiritual and bodily therapies. That Plotinus revered Plato but yet revered the image over the discursive in their ability to convey wisdom and beauty means that rather than banishing the poet from the republic, Plotinus in all likelihood—even if poetry and drama were modified or censored in his republic—there would be no way around the fact that Plotinus had opened Plato up to the unapologetic need for the poetic image within philosophy.

It would be hard to argue that Epicurus really had the good life down any better than Plotinus. He studied philosophy for two decades in Alexandria went to see the world and made it to Rome in one piece and, once in Rome, lived in a nice villa until his end. He had a masseuse for the most part, but he never indulged in a lavish life. Of course Plotinus did not appear attached to any of it. He mostly taught philosophy and managed the accounts of orphans it would appear. Did this man want more land for more orphans? Or just a more commanding political height for manifesting his

⁷⁹ Pierre Hadot (2002) *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase. Harvard University Press.

philosophy? The political vision of Plotinus is so incomplete. It is difficult to really reconstruct a cosmopolitan poetics out of this bifurcation of time and its ethical presentism.

A student of Socrates who lived over six hundred years before Plotinus lived a similarly pleasurable international life and likewise appeared quite unattached to that which he —unlike Plotinus indulged in regularly in the way of pleasure. Aristippus—as he was known—dramatized his relationship to a pleasurable life arguably by embracing presentism and in affect and doing away with Plato’s mythology of the *Timaeus* and with Plotinus’s bifurcation of time. His presentism or belief in *monochronos* appears in quite a novel light when compared with Plotinus’s difficulty with his body and with words. Aristippus lives a very different sort of presentism than the Plotinian one. One an openness to indulgence, but his commitment to pleasure was not in a gross or philosophically facile manner. The Cyrenaic hedonism of Aristippus and his followers focused more on the plasticity of the present and of the indeterminate possibility for pleasure interlaves within the present—not as objects in the manifold of nature’s presence as field—but as the *pragma* of lived-present affective elements—“the enacting elements of pleasure” (*ta poiaetika taes haedonaes*).

III. The Poesis of Cyrenaic Cosmopolitanism and the Reverie of Presentism

Eternity is a child playing games
The kingdom of a child

Αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων πεσσεύων
παιδὸς ἡ βασιλείη

— Heraclitus ⁸⁰

Aristippus's Cyrenaic school of philosophy is never mentioned in genealogies of cosmopolitanism. That says more about the conceptual horizons of what a theory of cosmopolitanism is expected to look like today than it says about the expansiveness of cosmopolitan dispositions and practices as overlap with the pursuit of discursive wisdom. In *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, by Diogenes Laertius, the term 'citizen of the cosmos' or similar such phrases like 'my fatherland is the cosmos' are so frequently used that consolidating this concept to an original politics of Cynic and Stoic thought exclusively is fraught. The term circulated so widely among philosophers that it appears more to have been a kind of catch-phrase qua disposition that many philosophers—if they were worthy of the title—would have deployed in their perambulations of Mediterranean space. A phrase like this lends international access to a variety of pedagogical spaces while likewise insisting on a role for wisdom and its field of inquiry as transcending political frontiers in its usefulness for all. Likewise, it presents and image of wisdom as potentially irreducible to the political as particular. It was in fact a pedagogical statement more than a political one, but one with political implications that should not be dismissed. Vitruvius's *De Architectura* tells the story of Aristippus being shipwrecked.

⁸⁰ Heraclitus (2003) *Fragments*. New York: Penguin, 60. My translation.

It is related of the Socratic philosopher Aristippus that, being shipwrecked and cast ashore on the coast of Rhodians, he observed geometrical figures drawn thereon, and cried out to his companions: "Let us be of good cheer, for I see the traces of man." With that he made for the city of Rhodes, and went straight to the gymnasium. There he fell to discussing philosophical subjects, and presents were bestowed upon him, so that he could not only fit himself out, but could also provide those who accompanied him with clothing and all other necessaries of life. When his companions wished to return to their country, and asked him what message he wished them to carry home, he bade them say this: that children ought to be provided with property and resources of a kind that could swim with them even out of a shipwreck. [...] The man of learning is the only person in the world who is neither a stranger in a foreign land, nor friendless when he has lost his intimates and relatives; on the contrary, he is a citizen of every country.⁸¹

For Aristippus, wisdom is inseparable from a cosmopolitan self, and a cosmopolitan self the only true test of wisdom's presence. Trials of strangeness and newness in the world of experience are a test of whether situations can be manipulate or managed through dialogic engagement with the indeterminacy of the present affair—no matter how foreign— and this for the sake of making it enjoyable. Three saying of Aristippus's point to this. When Aristippus was asked what he had gained from philosophy he says, "the ability to be feel at ease in any society."⁸² Secondly, he was asked what distinguished the wise from the unwise and he said, "Strip them both naked and send them among strangers (*agnôn*) and you will know."⁸³ Lastly, when asked what

⁸¹ Vitruvius (2014) *Cyrenaic Handbook* trans. Frank Redmond. Lexington, KY.

⁸² Diogenes Laertius (1972) *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Vol. I-II. trans. R.D. Hicks. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 197 Hereafter cited DL followed by the volume numeral and then the pagination as follows: DL I, 197

⁸³ DL I 203

advantage philosophers have he responds, “Should all laws be repealed, we shall go on living as we do now.”⁸⁴

Why have genealogies of cosmopolitanism not cared about the Cyrenaics? Probably because the Cyrenaics are labelled as hedonists, and, therefore, political and philosophical treatments of Epicurus are assumed to cover any of the earlier hedonist movements. That is what Kant seemed to presume in his straw-man refutation of Epicurianism as the only hedonist doctrine presented in his texts. An alternative hypothesis is that hedonism could not possibly form any stable ground for considering politics at an international level and, therefore, is quite limited in scope. This chapter pushes against this by focusing on epistemology and pedagogy. It is argued that the question of cosmopolitan ethics and of its possibility in the world is neither an isolated field of inquiry nor epistemologically stable. As political, however, the cosmopolitan question is inextricable from questions of ethics in politics. Furthermore, International Relations’ infatuation with ontology always raises epistemological questions in the arguing of that ontology, which epistemological questions tend to fall back on an account of the ethical content of politics. Therefore, most International Relations theorists, except the most dogmatic American exceptionalists perhaps, consider their theories to be helpful in facilitating good political outcomes across polities in relation. Our canonical realist authors—e.g., Waltz and Morgenthau—justify their realism in terms whereby admitting war serves to reduce its probability and magnitude. In short, most International Relations scholars are in some aspect of their thought contemplating

⁸⁴ DL I 199

the cosmopolitan question. But politics is taught. And before that absorbed or, at times, inherited. Politics has a poetic life in pedagogy that cannot be written out of epistemological concerns.

Hedonic Indeterminacy and Epistemology of the Affective Present

ὁ δὴ περιγίνεσθαι τοῖς ἀδιαφορησασι περὶ τὰ ποιητικὰ τῆς ἡδονῆς

— Hegesias the Cyrenaic ⁸⁵

In light of our over-familiarity with Epicurus's rational—and arguably quite stoicized—hedonism and with Stoic cosmopolitanism, it is important to investigate Cyrenaic hedonism in more detail lest we allow ourselves to think that Epicurus covers all hedonist possibilities. Another reason is that Cyrenaic philosophy's epidemic pervasiveness—spanning centuries and moving across continents in the Mediterranean—is only now coming into clarity.⁸⁶ Therefore, examining Cyrenaic thought, as it appears to have been poetically trenchant across spaces and cosmopolitically oriented, may upset the straw-man of Kant's Epicurus and this in ways that are helpful for looking at the poesis of temporality and ethics. Lastly, Cyrenaic epistemology may likewise pose fruitful alternatives to the simple relativisms of Sociological thought that are epidemic in International Relations' deployment of concepts like 'culture' 'society' and 'norms' in ways that tend to fall back on notions of a

⁸⁵ DLI 224

⁸⁶ Kurt Lampe (2015) *The Birth of Hedonism*. Princeton University Press; Ugo Zilioli (2012) *The Cyrenaics*. Durham, UK: Acumen Publishing.

bounded objectilely stable community as the assumed starting point for political ontologies of stability—the likes of which Durkheim and other republicanist sociologists have instilled and which now appear so ill-equipped for sorting through the social problems of the present and the possibilities for peaceability inhering therein; they appear ill-equipped largely because these theories always appear—like Durkheim before them—more interested in performing—through their unitary objectile gaze—the possibility of coherent units and thereby address their universalizing theories to an oddly ethnicizing political project of spatially uniformity and temporal consistency for the political as field of objects. An investigation into an earlier vision of hedonism, such as that of the Cyrenaic school, permits us to explore alternative poetic possibilities within political philosophy, other than the ones pedagogically handed down to us. It may, therefore, assist us in imaging the temporality and the spatiality of ethics in international relations in a manner that admits the importance of peoples' interest in pleasure and in ways that do not pathologize pleasure but instead focus on its indeterminacy through an admission of the present's loose ontological connection with the future. In short, to admit something of a presentism that is not contextualized but poeticized.

The Cyrenaics draw an important distinction in their departure from Pyrrhonian skepticism. For the Cyrenaics, the Pyrrhonian skeptic's position that knowledge is impossible is itself a dogma. The citations from Aristippus on the importance of wisdom and pedagogy would not hold unless the possibility of augmenting one's knowledge through inquiry were possible. Cyrenaics draw a sharp distinction from the Skeptics in

order to depart from the threat of this dogmatism present in the Skeptics' reduction of the world to a solipsistic impossibility of knowledge about it. Voula Tsouna relates Sextus' depiction of the difference between the Skeptics and the Cyrenaics as follows. Whereas "[the Skeptics'] aim was not to suspend judgment about what is known and to keep searching for truth, but to pronounce objective truth unreachable; [the Cyrenaics] 'suspend judgment about external objects, as far as the arguments go [but] declare these objects have an inapprehensible nature' (Sextus, *PH* I.215 [T6a])."⁸⁷ Thus the Cyrenaics conceive of an epistemology whose tone is strikingly similar to that of Kant's *First Critique* where skepticism is admitted and the inapprehensible⁸⁸ interiority of things becomes the site for discursive inquiry and the possibility of knowledge. The important imaginal difference is in the Cyrenaic refusal to pathologize pleasure and, secondly, in their ethical insistence on presentism through their temporal concept of *monochronos* discussed later.

Tsouna goes on to conclude that "The Cyrenaics could recommend themselves as Socratics on the grounds that they explored further the requirements for an objection-free definition of knowledge and came to realize that, in order to secure it, they must redefine knowledge in terms of awareness of internal states."⁸⁹ Likewise, Ugo Zilioli recommends that we read the Cyrenaics as the most authentic continuation of the

⁸⁷ Voula Tsouna (1998) *The Epistemology of the Cyrenaic School*. Cambridge University Press, 140.

⁸⁸ see *ibid.*, 32-3 on questions about likely reconstructions of the exact terminology of this speculative term translated as 'inapprehensible', specifically whether the original Cyrenaics would have used the word *katalambano* for apprehension as given by Sextus. She suggests that this is a later stoic term and that *aisthansthai* or *gignoskein* are more likely original to earlier Cyrenaic vocabularies.

⁸⁹ *ibid.* 40-1

Socratic tradition against Plato's derivative cooptation of the Socratic voice.⁹⁰ That being said, the question of Socratic authenticity is not relevant here. Rather distinguishing Cyrenaics' own philosophical differences from the schools that dominate in our recollections of the major philosophical schools in antiquity, and in particular Epicurian and Stoic thought with which the Cyrenaics differed in subtle but important ways.

In her juxtaposition of the foundationalist assumptions of Epicurus and Stoicism with Cyrenaic epistemology and its alternative to Pyrrhonian Skepticism, Tsouna writes, "the Epicurean and Stoic theses concerning the criterion presuppose a systematic correlation between the truth of the criterion and the reality of what it reports."⁹¹ Epicurus's epistemology relates the criterion for judging knowledge to the instrument of measurement—the ruler—in the examination of objects of apparition in the world.

Sensations (*aestheseis*), preconceptions (*prolepseis*), undergoings or affections (*pathe*), and, in later Epicureanism, mental impressions (*phantastikai epibolai tes dianoias*) qualify as criteria primarily because they provide the means by which further evidence can be tested. The analogy of the ruler illustrates a main epistemic function of the Epicurean criteria: their application to things which are not immediately and directly observable *augments* our knowledge about these non-evident things, just as the application of the standard ruler to unknown lengths increases our knowledge about those lengths.⁹²

By contrast, Stoic foundationalist epistemology invokes a different notion of the criteria by which objective knowledge is purported.

Provided that one perceives an external object in a clear and distinct way, one has no choice but to acknowledge the content of the perception as true [...] For the

⁹⁰ Zilioli 50

⁹¹ Tsouna 53-4

⁹² *ibid.* 35

primary criterial function of the cognitive impression is not to test things other than itself, but to establish its own content as true of the object which the cognitive impression exactly represents. While Epicurus considered that the knowledge provided through the use of the criteria is primarily inferential knowledge about things other than the criteria themselves, the Stoics identified knowledge through the criterion as immediate, non-inferential knowledge. One's knowledge about the world does gradually grow, not because the criterion is applied to non-evident states of affairs, but because one receives an increasing number of propositions as true. (Notice the foundationalist assumptions involved in both the Epicurean and in Stoic criteria).⁹³

But if the Pyrrhonian skeptics acknowledge the *pathae* as the criterion 'whereby hunger leads us to food and thirst to drink'⁹⁴, then what is the epistemological connection for the Cyrenaics between the *pathae* that we undoubtedly experience and the possibility of acquiring knowledge which the Cyrenaics insist on despite the internality of *pathaec* experience? Or as Tsouna puts it, "What is the connection between one's feeling of pain and the awareness that one is cut?"⁹⁵ On the one hand, the *pathae* are described by Arete's pupil, the Metrodidact, as varying like the motions of the sea. Pain is a rough internal motion resembling "a storm at sea"; Pleasure "is similar to smooth sea waves"; lastly the intermediate condition—two which we are indifferent, because neither pleasurable or painful but yet aware of—is "like a calm sea".⁹⁶ Diogenes Laertius' doxography of the Cyrenaics defines "pleasure as 'the smooth movement that comes forth to aisthesis' (D.L. II.85 [T7a])."⁹⁷ Therefore, Tsouna concludes that there is "a

⁹³ *ibid.* 35-6

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 36-7

⁹⁵ *ibid.* 14

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 11

⁹⁷ *ibid.* 10

clear distinction between the physical movement and one's consciousness of it."⁹⁸ In short, there is a poetics of affective imagery coupled with a reflexive moment of self-consciousness of the world of objects and people as affecting the internal *pathae*.⁹⁹ And this occurs with the possibility for discursive knowledge to be procured by experience and pedagogy, but such knowledge is not directed at a eudaimonist good-life of happiness because happiness is an abstraction. The self is interested in experiences as such and not an abstract aggregation of experiences. This distinction is key to understanding Cyrenaic disagreement with the idea of Epicurean thought that postcedes Cyrenaic hedonism with the rise of imperial Rome.

Cyrenaics begin with a very similar epistemology as Kant; however, because they do not take up any of the Kantian Enlightenment imagery, the Cyrenaics end up dramatizing a highly presentist ethics that uses the indeterminacy of pleasure's subjectivity to highlight the plasticity of the self-in-the-world as a shared present, or to use their language, a '*pragma*' as affair of the apparently shared but discursively manipulable present.

The Agora of Bodies in Politics

The basic conceptual theme for Cyrenaic presentism and its disavowal of abstract happiness as an ethical end is the term *monochronos*—literally singular time. How to best

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ See Zilioli on the linguistic behavioralism of the Cyrenaics; I have chosen the term poetics in keeping with the line from the doxography referring to the Cyrenaic refusal to differentiate between "the enacting elements of pleasure" or "*ta poiaetika taes haedonaes*".

translate this term is somewhat disputed among scholars of Cyrenaic thought. Tsouna argues that *monochronos* is best understood in terms of the limited longevity of a given pleasurable or painful experience.¹⁰⁰ This monochronality, as it were, is central to understanding the Cyrenaic refutation of abstract happiness in life because the Cyrenaic position is that memories of past pleasure or pain or the anticipation of future pleasure or pain is not really constitutive of what humans aim for in life. Rather, the experience as lived *pathae* is what people are interested in either enacting in the case of pleasure or avoiding in the case of pain. The epistemological conundrum, however, is that pleasure is ultimately subjective but also fairly indeterminate, but this apparent epistemological limit can be seen as likewise authoring a political opportunity. Here the Cyrenaics do take an important position in contrast to Epicurus. They argue that bodily pains are far more of an ethical deterrent than mental pains, the latter being what Epicurus maintains that the wise will avoid above all and that the wise are indifferent to pains of the body.

Epicurus, therefore, configures quite an odd refutation of the Cyrenaic position. On one hand, the Epicureans take *eudaimonia*—conventionally translated as happiness—as the goal. On the other hand, the unknowability of outcomes in life that can secure a set of pleasureable experiences means that happiness cannot properly be objectively possible through securing pleasurable experiences and must therefore be imagined in terms of absence of pain. What is more, Epicurus claimed that mental pains were more upsetting than bodily pains. Oddly and in contrast to the connotation intended by the modern term Epicurean, the doxography of Epicurus has him arguing for little in the

¹⁰⁰ Tsouna 15

way of sensual enjoyment. As a justification for the premise that mental pains are greater than physical pains, Epicurus's imaginary of the wise philosopher as ethical embodiment in its poetic course is strikingly Stoic when compared with the Cyrenaics. Epicurus writes, "Even on the rack the wise man is happy [...] When on the rack, however, he will give vent to cries and groans."¹⁰¹

To understand the Epicurean position and its departure from that of the Cyrenaics requires focusing on their alternative temporal understandings of the self. Central, therefore, to Epicurean notions of pleasure is the notion rejected by Cyrenaics that memories are perdurations and extend pain and pleasure out across the broader entirety of a life's existence. Mental pains, in contrast to bodily pains, are far worse for Epicurus, for "the flesh endures the storms of the present alone, the mind those of the past and future as well as the present. In this way he holds mental pleasures to be greater than those of the body."¹⁰² This appears to be the philosophy of a man who is quite attached to his reputation perhaps and prone to experience quite acutely something like shame or humiliation as a potentially life-ruining mental anxiety. Hence, for the wise, the rack is not an object of concern and deliberation. This position has potentially frightening social consequences.

The point that can be drawn from Epicurus' temporality of the self and his referral of hedonist doctrine to a flight from pain—in particular mental shame and regret—over the pursuit of pleasure where pain and pleasure are properly understood to

¹⁰¹ DL II 647

¹⁰² *ibid.* 661

be more severe in the case of mental pain is the following. The Epicurean movement in this respect really admits an entirely stoic rendering of hedonism. Here the sight of philosophical debate between the two great schools of the Roman imperial period—Epicurean and Stoic—appear to both share the obsession with the philosopher as an embodied portrait of an abstract configuration of a good life that is more stoic in its temporality than anything the Cyrenaic would recognize as coherently hedonist. Reason becomes, for Epicurus, the means to detachment from the present towards cultivating an attentive thwarting of mental anguish and reminiscence. The ethical image of the philosopher thereby becomes that of a life lived in totality, and the site of public portraiture of ethicality become the philosopher's embodied reflection on his self-image.

By Epicurus's time, the space of philosophy has been reconfigured away from the earlier Mediterranean agora of Cyrenaic-Cynic-Skeptic sparring that the early Cyrenaics inhabited. No longer is this a dramatic and dialogic enactment in the public agora where things and bodies circulate in a space of acute proximity with the present world of political commercial and embodied life. Epicurus, we are told, considered "the dialectic as distracting".¹⁰³ Epicurus is inhabiting a stoicized space of detached philosophy at a time when philosophical schools are setting themselves in ideal—and often exclusive and state subsidized—communities of adherents that were insulated from the vagaries of divergent philosophical quippings and public performances where radical contestation was often the norm and wide ranging opinions circulated in dialogical

¹⁰³ DL II 561

dramatics. When reading the Epicurean ethical doxography, in contrast to Cyrenaics, it is striking how similar the Epicurean philosopher's public persona is to the Kantian one. The ethical opposition of Stoic with Epicurean is commonly taken as hinging on their differing view of pleasure. But if we look at the spatial, temporal and ethical imaginaries of philosophy's public import, as it is being performed through these two schools, there is not a terribly trenchant divergence between Epicurus and Stoicism. It is more of an academic debate of analytics than an ethically charged divergence on questions of public morality. Both insist on the cultivation of this image of wisdom and public ethics as a performance of detachment from the embodied experience of the present in favor of an abstract rendering of a discursively over-determined stoic ethic of propounded indifference on the part of the wise to the present.

Monochronos on the part of the Cyrenaics represents a hedonist alternative that is opposed to stoicizing self-reflection. So what are the consequences of such a temporal imaginary for the self as it is likely to be prone, at times, to painful and delightful memories and concerns for reputation? In Zilioli's reconstruction of the Cyrenaic philosophy of subjectivity, he uses the term, 'loose self' to refer to the coherence or persistence of subjectivity across time while at the same time accounting for this self as one that cannot be so coherent as to become the object of proper ethical pursuits. This 'loosely' aggregated self bridges the ethical disposition of monochronality as attention to the experience of the moment as experience with the possibility for accumulating knowledge and the cultivation of an ethical disposition that traverses the momentary. Zilioli offers the following description.

In the Cyrenaic world, both objects and persons are best interpreted as bundles of some episodic and temporary features. Since they are not equipped with a stable ontological essence, objects and persons are best thought of as being under perennial change and as moving from one episode of their fragmented life to the subsequent one with no possible interruption. Objects and persons are, for Cyrenaics, aggregates immersed in a perennial process of transformation and modification.¹⁰⁴

For the metaphysics of process over a metaphysics of objects which this theory implies, monochronality becomes an essential element in the centrality of affective process. For Zilioli, like Tsouna, *monochronos* “aims to convey the idea that each *pathos* lasts only for the time in which it is actually felt. This means [from] an encounter between the subject feeling the affection and something else causing the affection. When one of the two poles of the relationship breaks away, the affection perishes.”¹⁰⁵ However, Voula Tsouna, Ugo Zilioli and Kurt Lampe all argue in their own way that despite the Cyrenaic emphasis on bodily pleasures and pains over mental ones; they do not discard the relevance of mental aspects in the experience of bodily pleasure.¹⁰⁶ Zilioli gives us the following account.

The loose subject experiences the pleasure of the present and makes it the goal of its life. The pleasure of the present is bodily, in so far as for the Cyrenaics each and every pleasure begins with an alteration of the body. [...]

The psychological connectedness I attribute to the Cyrenaic loose subject is ultimately responsible for the production and elaboration of those extra-affective, belief-related activities that influence the actual way in which we experience pleasure. [...]

According to Diogenes, the Cyrenaics conceive of happiness as “a collection made out of particular pleasures. Among these both past and future pleasures

¹⁰⁴ Zilioli 112

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Lampe; Tsouna; Zilioli

are counted together" [...] [H]appiness cannot be properly regarded as the end, since that would presuppose an idea of life as a single and determinate item, such as the one that is implied in, for instance, Aristotle's eudaimonist ethics."¹⁰⁷

In a compelling revisiting of Plato's and Aristotle's refutation of hedonism and its ethical object as pleasure, Zilioli points to the passage from the *Philebus* where Socrates is quoted as saying, "Have we not been told that pleasure is always a process of becoming, and that there is no being at all of pleasure? There are some subtler thinkers who have tried to pass on this doctrine to us, and we ought to be grateful to them."¹⁰⁸ Zilioli argues that Plato's Socrates here—and in the *Thaetetus* more so—is in fact presenting Cyrenaic thought under the term 'the subtler thinkers'.¹⁰⁹ Zilioli ascertains Socrates's potential endorsement of the Cyrenaic position on pleasure, an endorsement that Plato's reconstruction of the dialogues does not totally overwrite.¹¹⁰ The rhetorical rearticulation of pleasure's non-being, in Plato's account of Socrates's position, is enough for Plato and Aristotle to refute pleasure's ethical status; for Plato and Aristotle, the fact that pleasure is mere becoming is enough to dismiss it as a viable ground for ethical thought and the reason is that their vision of the unitary abstract image of a philosophical life as ethical life that enables this dismissal. "Both Plato in the *Philebus* and Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics* are concentrating on what mostly matters in human life [and] both insist that what matters in human life must belong to the realm of

¹⁰⁷ Zilioli 162-3

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* 165

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* 50

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* 71

essences: of what is just in virtue of itself and not in relation to any other thing.”¹¹¹ But Zilioli speculates that Socrates’s position on the matter was likely to have been more open to that of the Cyrenaics. Recall Tsouna held a similar opinion on the issue of epistemology.

Lampe’s reconstruction of Cyrenaic thought proposes no such connection between the Cyrenaics and the “subtler thinkers” of Plato’s Socrates, but his treatment of Cyrenaic presentism is broadly similar to Zilioli’s reconstruction. However, Lampe focuses more on the indeterminacy of the present as *pragma* and as the site for creative malleability. Perhaps, we might say that, for Lampe, Cyrenaic presentism falls back on an economy of psychic energy.¹¹² While Cyrenaics insist on the *pragma*—or affair—of the present, they do not dismiss that future concerns are of no import. In fact, the core distinction between the Cyrenaics and the Pyrrhonian skeptics, as we saw earlier, relates to the former’s position that philosophy and learning are productive. But the dilemma that requires explanation then is how do we reconcile that with the presentism of their ethics. Kempe puts it in terms of the language of philosophical conversion: if the Cyrenaics are intent on maintaining that the present is all that should concern us, why is anyone ever tempted to modify their pursuits in favor of a beneficial philosophical knowledge-acquiring pursuit. Of course, it is clear from all the anecdotes about Aristippus’ life that conversation and the dialogic drama of philosophy is quite fun. Kempe says something similar but attends to the temporal dilemma. Cyrenaics are

¹¹¹ *ibid.* 165-6

¹¹² Lampe mentions *oikonomia* in this regard, 83

interested in happiness he argues but only indirectly in so far as it may be viewed as an aggregation of many pleasurable and few painful experiences. But the ethics of presentism mean that “Happiness is the unintended consequence”¹¹³ of *the way in which the wise pursue pleasure in the present*. And with regard to conversion to the philosophical life, Lampe proposes the following:

For example, let us imagine that Anniceris’s future student Posidonius has experienced tremendous disappointment in his home polis before coming to Cyrene as an exile.¹¹⁴ Perhaps members of his political faction were even dispossessed and killed. Witnessing Anniceris’s steady good humor, Posidonius could conceive the definite end of eliminating his particular distress through Anniceris’s philosophy. Eating, drinking and conversing with Anniceris for a day, Posidonius might think, “I want to enjoy *this* again tomorrow.” After a series of similar decisions, each taken with a view to particular pleasures or avoidances of pain, Posidonius might find his distress greatly lessened, his theoretical and practical command of Anniceris’s philosophy progressing, and his desire to return to Anniceris every day firmly entrenched. His general transformation of lifestyle and character would thus have occurred accidentally, as it were, through specific decisions.¹¹⁵

What comes across more than anything as centrally important for the purposes of an ethical imaginary or poesis of presentism in Lampe’s treatment of monochronality is not the philosophical viability of wedding presentism with the possibility of happiness achieved indirectly; rather, it is that, by focusing on the present and the indeterminacy of that present as *pragma*, we actually come to manage its plasticity and even perform its indeterminacy in favor of not only an egoist outcome but a potentially

¹¹³ *ibid.* 90

¹¹⁴ Lampe notes (and I should as well) that we do not know why Posidonius came to Cyrene; we only know that he was not from Cyrene.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* 91

intersubjective meliorism. By contrast identities and worlds that consolidate temporality and objectile consistencies erode otherwise contingent interconnections of pleasurable outcomes by insisting on a temporal stability to things that requires an overemphasis on the social order's ethical prioritization as seen with Kant. With something like pleasure, *pragma* and presentism these other projects will tend toward perforation and inherit a more loose connection with the future in ways that are productive. Of the multiple accounts handed down to us of Aristippus, there is a consistent emphasis on Aristippus' adaptability and his ability to accommodate himself to the situation or *pragma* at hand. For Lampe, this achieves the other virtue of "sociability" for which Aristippus was known—his ability to find cheer amidst any sort of company.¹¹⁶

This social cunning blends into temperance as Diogenes' testimony proceeds, beginning with the statement that Aristippus "always dealt successfully with whatever happened." The phrase "deal successfully" (*eu diatithemenos*) implies *active manipulation of the situation*. [...] One reason Aristippus makes such good use of available opportunities, this passage hints, is because he knows that most situations offer some pleasures. This hint is corroborated by the very next clause, which says that Aristippus enjoys what is present and does not worry about what is absent.

Far from contradicting the emphasis Aristippus places on education and virtue, his effort to concentrate on the present thus presupposes and helps to justify it. It is only by understanding emotionally and intellectually what matters and knowing that one has the capacity to secure these goods that anyone can really focus on the present. That is why pseudo-Plutarch claims Aristippus learned this by studying Odysseus, who is not only renowned for courage and effectiveness in battle, but more particularly for his *temperance and cunning*. Paradoxically, it is only a person of firm character and profound insight who can be so malleable, adapting comfortably to every situation.

Like their notional founder Aristippus, the later Cyrenaics are committed to a series of values beyond the experiences of pleasure and pain. ... [T]hese values imply the Cyrenaics are interested in what sort of people they are and what sort

¹¹⁶ DL I 197

of lives they lead. To put it another way, these values show us how the Cyrenaics attempt to construct a way of life on the foundation of the goodness of pleasant experiences and badness of painful ones.¹¹⁷

It is now beginning to become clear how an interpersonal ethics of cosmopolitan import becomes accessible through a presentist temporality and loosely aggregated self whose interests in pleasure and pain are—because of the relative indeterminacy and multiple possibilities for these—a *pragma* that render the present in quite plastic and malleable terms. Yet these terms are not without ethical possibility except that they completely alter the scope of cosmopolitan practice and even undo what is otherwise conceived of as this kind of bifurcation of political space between the state and the public. To understand how Cyrenaic pursuits dramatically enact this, it helps to look at the dramatic and ironic undoing of conventional views of value as they are monetized and likewise conventional views of gender as they are characterized through sexual practice in Aristippus's time.

If there is any other philosopher from the Socratic period who seems as bent as Diogenes the Cynic on 'defaming the currency', it is Aristippus. Yet Aristippus does this in a radically different way than the ascetic Diogenes. Central to the Cyrenaic ironic undoing of monetized value is their presentism. Aristippus was of course known for his extravagance; although it is not clear the degree to which these stories have been embellished. It appears that however, exaggerated they may have been, central to these tales of extravagance is a dramatic and philosophical critique of value that is very different—and arguably more productive—than that of Cynic asceticism. That

¹¹⁷ Lampe 73

divergence from asceticism as it also maintains the possibility for unsettling the monetizing norms of value that seemingly dictate how asceticism is configured and limit the Cynic in many ways appears to necessitate philosophy as both dialogic and dramatic enactments. For example, there is the story told by Diogenes Laertius of Aristippus being criticized by another philosopher when he is seen carrying rich foods with him. The following exchange ensues.

“Would not you have bought this if you could have got it for three obols?”
The answer being in the affirmative, “Very well, then,” said Aristippus, “I am no longer a lover of pleasure, it is you who are a lover of money.”¹¹⁸

And in a similar fashion:

Polyxenes the sophist once paid him a visit and, after having seen ladies present and expensive entertainment, reproached him with it later. After an interval Aristippus asked him, “Can you join us today?” On the other accepting the invitation, Aristippus inquired, “Why, then, did you find fault? For you appear to blame the cost and not the entertainment.”¹¹⁹

And:

When his servant was carrying money and found the load too heavy—the story is told by Bion in his *Lectures*—Aristippus cried, “Pour away the greater part, and carry no more than you can manage.”¹²⁰

In all of these anecdotes, presentism becomes a lens that undoes the monetization of value. Hegesias will likewise emphasize that the rich are no more content than the poor, and this is not a novel theme. However, what is interesting is that the present and its indeterminacy with regard to future pleasure means that money can not be an objective in and of itself, nor linear continuity with the present provisional order as the

¹¹⁸ DL I 205

¹¹⁹ DL I 205

¹²⁰ DL I 205-6

sole imaginal possibility of collective morality's futurity. Aristippus's relationships with courtesans are also a common theme. They are treated in a similar fashion as his temporal lens undoes the possibility for any inhering stable expectations of obligation other than as may be cultivated pleasurably. His relationship with the famous courtesan Laïs finds him being interrogated about her relations with other men; to this he responds that he does not own her but that they both get pleasure from time to time from one another. This is an important implication of the philosophy of process that Tsouna, Zilioli and Lampe help us reconstruct; that the kinds of claims over things and people can no longer be viewed as settled or stable.

In turning the political, the central point of contestation between Aristippus and his Cynic contemporary Diogenes of Sinope can now be examined. This is the configuration of pleasure and ethics with regard to political power. There is an entertaining story from the *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* that is picked up by Foucault, and this gets right at the heart of why, at least in the present contemplation of international ethics, it may be more ethically productive to think in terms of poesis as epidemics of the imaginary rather than pursuing a methodology of genealogy. One might perhaps say that this distinction yet carries a great deal of Foucaultian sympathies about the present's contingency, but this departure from genealogy as such also finds its bearing in the genealogist's tendency to focus on an unsubstantiated quasi-linearity of ideational-discursive traceability which is arguably just as performative of the present "West" and of intractable imperial projection through history as it is divulging of the present's contingent origin. In *Government of Self and Others*, Foucault relates the

following anecdote from Diogenes Laertius of the encounter between Cynic Diogenes and Plato.

One day, Plato would have seen Diogenes the Cynic washing his salad. Plato sees him washing his salad, and recalling that Dionysius had appealed to Diogenes and that Diogenes had rejected his appeal, he says to him: If you had been more polite to Dionysius you would not have to wash your salad. To which Dionysius replies: If you had acquired the habit of washing your salad “you would not have been the slave of Dionysius.” I think this anecdote from Diogenes Laertius is very important and very serious. It indicates the two poles in terms of which, and very quickly, from the fourth century, the problem of the meeting point between philosophical truth-telling and political practice found two points of insertion: the public arena or the Prince’s soul. And we will find these two polarities throughout the history of Western thought. Should philosophical discourse be the discourse addressed to the Prince’s soul in order to form it? Or should the true discourse of philosophy be delivered in the public arena as challenge, confrontation, derision, and criticism with regard to the Prince’s action and to political action?¹²¹

Almost this exact story occurs twice in the chapter on Aristippus from *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*; however, there it is related that the encounter described above between Diogenes the Cynic does not include Plato, but rather Aristippus and later on Theodosius the Cyrenaic and Metroclus the Cynic.¹²² What is more this anecdote appears in the Cynic Epistles of the second century CE with regard to Diogenes and Aristippus, but never is it mentioned there with regard to Plato.¹²³ Lastly, in an alternative anecdote that is quite similar, Diogenes scolds Aristippus for his being a slave

¹²¹ Michel Foucault (2011) *Government of Self and Other*. trans. Graham Burchall. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 291.

¹²² DL I 197, 231

¹²³ Abraham Malherbe (ed.) (1977) *Cynic Epistles*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 139.

to Dionysius, but, unlike with Plato, Aristippus issues as a rebuttle from a lost play of Sophocles saying that 'one who comes as a free man is no slave'.¹²⁴

In the Cyrenaic version, the tale goes as follows. Diogenes initiates the conversation by calling out to Aristippus while washing vegetables that if Aristippus has made vegetables his diet, he would not have frequented the court of a tyrant. To this Aristippus replies that if Diogenes had frequented the court of a tyrant, he would not be washing vegetables. It is of course possible that Plato had a similar conversation with Diogenes, perhaps everyone did. But the anecdote seems to have been taken up as a central theme in the inter-relations between Cynic and Cyrenaic thought since it appears in so many instances. That the Cynic Epistles of 200 CE relate the same Cynic-Cyrenaic disagreement suggests that at least from the standpoint of Cynic memory into 200 CE, the more philosophically relevant opponent on this question of lifestyle/ accommodation of tyranny were the Cyrenaics, for there is no record of the Plato anecdote there.

Foucault may not be wrong *per se* to focus on the Plato story, but if this ethically charged story is, from the Cynic perspective, more a Cyrenaic-Cynic question, and not so much about a Prince's soul that neither of these groups cared about, then that changes things a little bit. Foucault is writing about the polarity of spaces of critique, but he is writing the Greeks retrospectively as torn necessarily between the alternative figures of Plato and the Cynic. But Foucault's imaginary requires that the Cyrenaics not be their for such a polarity to issue from this encounter, or rather that the Cyrenaics never be a part of this story. This is because the Cyrenaics undo the polarity of those alternative spaces in the

¹²⁴ DL I 211

same way that they destabilized value and gender relations—by dialogic affairs that enact pleasure's presence, whether for the Prince or for the common student, through indeterminate presentist dramatics.

What I suggest here is that it is much more fruitful to think of philosophy's critical engagement with princely power in terms of the Cyrenaic-Cynic alternatives as it is repeatedly told of those two groups. Not only is there more historical evidence; it is also a more productive debate. It is not an interesting anecdote when Plato approaches Diogenes, given Diogenes's radical anti-institutional behavior and antics in the agora. It merely comes off as a childish provocation by Plato. For Foucault, the Plato story leaves us with an intransigent polarity of political space, but not really in the form that Foucault understands it. This is not really Foucault's hegemonic West. Plato and Diogenes are just two pompous philosophers among many. The Prince's soul is not a big deal for most philosophers in Athens because most people in Athens are not Platonists; so the dyad actually falls apart when presented as spatial polarity of critique. In the context of the agora that Plato and Diogenes inhabited, as populated by figures like Aristippus, the Skeptics and the Sophists etc., Foucault's West is not present. It is unimaginable that Plato has anything to prove by telling Diogenes that he could have lived otherwise. Of course Diogenes could have lived otherwise, and any lesson that Diogenes could be said to offer Plato in the way of a rebuke makes no difference to Plato. It is only useful as an anecdote that admits the impossibility of resolution between two statically opposed poles, not that of the Prince's soul and of the public square but just of

Plato and Diogenes. That was the nature of philosophy as the public drama of critique in the agora; it was more about the personalities.

But the Cyrenaics actually pose a challenge to Cynic thought and apparently Cynic memory as the Cynic Epistles attests. For the Cynic feels that Diogenes has met the Cyrenaics on their own ground; for if pleasure is so indeterminate, then you Aristippus could have yet lived pleasurably on vegetables and not had to endure the reputation of one who panders to tyrants. But of course the Cyrenaics feel they have the upper hand because there is no ground for judging which is better; they merely appear as alternative courses taken by each in the reflective moment of this encounter that presents their alterity. The focus here is not on the bifurcation of spaces for critique between the court/Prince's soul and the agora/public space; it is on the question of the philosopher's own self-possession with regard to money and employment. Diogenes and the Cynics view diet and ascetic habits as all important in maintaining an un beholdenness to social institutions and thereby consolidating autonomy and self-possession. There are many places that the Cynic does not frequent, not just the Prince's court. But as Aristippus famously said when inquired about his going to Dionysius's disreputable court in what could have been viewed as a disavowal of Socrates's teachings, "When I needed wisdom, I went to Socrates; and now that I need money I come to [Dionysius]." ¹²⁵

The bifurcation of public and courtly spaces tends to unravel when Aristippus is thrown in the mix because Cyrenaic and Cynic philosophy was never about critiquing

¹²⁵ DL I 207

power but rather opinion as such and this for the purpose of cultivating a sense of self-possession. The pursuit was not critique but pedagogy and epistemology for their own sake. Aristippus's philosophy could never entertain a moral alterity to this question of two spaces that Foucault poses because different seasons call for different things—sometimes one wants wisdom at other times one wants money. This agora of the Cyrenaics was never a single agora but always tied to other agoras and cities through the ambulant personas. Aristippus did not make for Athens because it was the center of Greek life. He went to the Olympiad where he heard about Socrates and then went to see Socrates. For him, there was nothing significant about Athens or about the philosophical milieu of Athens after Socrates that is why he left. This complex social space may have been lost to the Mediterranean of post-imperial antiquity at least in the manner that Aristippus inhabited it. Pedagogy was dramatic and public and indeterminate. Cyrenaic philosophy's unsettling of rigid spatial and temporal social framing might arguably be thought of in this way: Cyrenaics—and other philosophers like them—tended to carry the agora with them because the agora was many places. And so every place they went was likewise inflected with an agora-like aura through them. Their status as teachers of wisdom and of their public persona as a dramatic one meant that every space they moved into saw something of the indeterminacy of a public dialogue and the question of wisdom posed of that space, and this with multiple possibilities for and in proximity to the coursing of the city's life. Enjoy what you can get away with saying where and when you can. The real question of importance to the

Cyrenaic and Cynic debate regards money and the philosopher's ownership of self. This brings up serious questions for academics today that we cannot get into.

Black Athena or Creole Cyrenaica

Being rooted in a place is a different kind of experience from have and cultivating a 'sense of place.' A truly rooted community may have shrines and monuments, but it is unlikely to have museums and societies for the preservation of the past. The effort to evoke a sense of place and of the past is often deliberate and conscious. To the extent that the effort is conscious it is the mind at work, and the mind—if allowed its imperial sway—will annul the past by making it all present knowledge.

— Yi-Fu Tuan ¹²⁶

Revisiting Aristippus and the Cyrenaics allows us to return to the space of Mediterranean agora and its poesis. Rather than revisiting Greek philosophy for a set of doctrines and insisting that our account acknowledge their traceability and alteration into Roman and Christian life, we contemplate the alternative spatial renderings of philosophical bodies. While the Epicurean, Stoic, Aristotelian and Platonic movements are consolidated in different schools under Roman rule in the Mediterranean, the consolidation of the Cynic tradition has likewise been tied to a kind of monastic tradition of asceticism and critical renunciation of society. All of this falls in line with what the genealogists of the early Christian period tell us. But what interests us here is the undoing of the space of the agora. As mentioned in the previous interlude, the political project for Plotinus is imagined in terms of a city of philosophers within the

¹²⁶ Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) *Space and Place*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 198.

Roman empire. Similarly with the Epicureans, Peripatetics and Stoics, the space of pedagogy within the Roman empire becomes an institutional space of adherents and a consolidation of particular schools where, as in the case of Epicurus already mentioned, it becomes possible not to engage in dialogic inquiry and dramatic contestation but rather to engender a more insulated contemplation and written elaboration of those doctrines particular to given schools. This outline does not intend to overstate the limitations that this trend imposed on debate and the poetic transference of ideas as the Mediterranean was imperialized in ways that it never had been. The important point, however, is that the agora space no longer appears as it was in Cyrenaic philosophical life, and perhaps this had something to do with the efficacy with which pagan shrines were destroyed and religious persecutions emerged as a normative social feature of the late empire. The Cyrenaic philosophical view is not a view that is inaccessible culturally or linguistically for us. But spatially with regards to pedagogy alone perhaps. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to explore Cyrenaica and the agoras of the North African Mediterranean as spaces where such a philosophy has, in the spatial imaginaries of the past, taken on a kind of epidemic force, one that morphed into a pedagogy that espoused drama and joy amidst political indeterminacy and never without making itself public.

In Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* he shows the multiple ethnic and continental origins of Greek society by showing how Romantic scholarship of the 19th century constructed the Europeanness of the Greeks retrospectively.¹²⁷ His first volume shows

¹²⁷ Martin Bernal (1987) *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. Vol. I The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

how Romantic scholarship constructs this Europeanness as if deaf to a myriad of signs across Greek life that point to its multiple cultural origins. He published two more volumes which laid out the archeological and linguistic evidence for the multiple origins of Greek language and material life.¹²⁸

While I agree with Robbie Shilliam that it is important “to build your own cross-cultural relationalities that are not illuminated by the all-blinding foil of the Greeks”,¹²⁹ a kind of presentism on my own part views the Cyrenaics—in light of Bernal’s evidence on the creolity of the Greeks themselves—in the space of the agoras of those centuries and sees something that speaks a language of an indeterminate self and a pliable relationality in the world that does away with the imperative of peace as cast in terms of “cross-cultural” in favor of an admission of a loosely aggregated creolity to life pedagogically pursued. Therefore, this chapter has perhaps more to say of the space of Cyrenaic creolity in articulating a philosophy bound up with its places of pedagogy as its practice has been very much overwritten by our imaginaries of the Greek polity and of its import for us.

In light of Bernal’s linguistic research and of the effort here to cast the social space of the agora in a slightly different light that Foucault’s juxtaposition of the agora with the court, Creole Cyrenaica appears as originary as any other Greek movement to

¹²⁸ Martin Bernal (1991) *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. Vol. II: The Archeological and Documentary Evidence*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; Martin Bernal (2006) *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization. Vol. III The Linguistic Evidence*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. It is important to note of his critics that none have compiled anything close to the kind of extensive linguistic and archeological research to challenge his findings.

¹²⁹ Robbie Shilliam (2011) “Decolonizing the Grounds of Ethical Inquiry: A Dialogue between Kant, Foucault and Glissant” in *Millenium* 39(3) 665.

the linguistic and material origination of the Greek vocabulary as such. Zilioli writes of the robustness of the Cyrenaics's philosophical corpus and of its presence in Mediterranean life,

We are therefore far from the traditional picture of the Cyrenaics as a minor Socratic school with a restricted philosophical interest in ethics alone. In addition to hedonism, the Cyrenaics not only developed an original epistemology, but were also committed to indeterminacy in metaphysics and to behaviorism in the philosophy of language. This makes the Cyrenaic school a proper philosophical school, with a clear and sophisticated theoretical agenda. On the ground of this more positively oriented interpretation of the Cyrenaic school (and, by extension, of the other two Socratic schools of the Megarics and the Cynics about which there is still much to learn), Plato and Aristotle appear to have been not giants in a philosophical desert, but two great philosophers in good company. The Socratic schools were minor up to a certain point.¹³⁰

Here, it is important to emphasize that the denotation of minor and major is itself even deceiving because it paints a retrospective. The Cynic Epistles co-opt Aristippus with as much import as their cooptation of Plato. Furthermore, the configuration of minor as opposed to major implies a kind of rendering of an entirety for the space of ancient philosophy whereby such determinations are made. However, if we cast aside the need for singular determinations about relative influence being as these come to be over-determined by the spatial and temporal parameters of our own regard; it is clear that we may find many Cyrenaic sensibilities in places we would not otherwise expect. Likewise, we may look more closely at spaces where the historical record suggests unqualifiably the majoriness of Cyrenaic thought. And this would thereby allow us to speculate as to how such spaces as allow for epidemic enactments of Cyrenaic poetics to

¹³⁰ Zilioli 175

hold imaginal traction far beyond their containment and minimalization in other contexts.

One of the important reasons to refuse the determination of minor and major has a lot to do with what we mean by influence as opposed to relevance. And here relevance should be broadly understood not as some kind of social, philosophical or political relevance but rather experiential. For, on the one hand, it is possible to pose transcendental questions of the discursive type that Kant engages in with the concepts of freedom and right but rather from a Cyrenaic interest on the ethicality of avoiding pain and suffering. Why is it that the vocabulary commonly deployed for speaking about political and social life often deploys the vocabulary of epidemiology and health? One of our sources tells that the conversion of Dionysus of Heraclea left the Stoics and joined the Cyrenaics because of a physical illness. Lampe describes the conversion of Dionysus “The Turncoat” as follows:

As a Stoic, Dionysius knew a battery of arguments demonstrating that pain and suffering were indifferent. His acute illness should not therefore have affected his judgment of his own well-being. But at the level Lucian describes as his “bodily philosophizing,” he was profoundly certain that his situation was very unsatisfying indeed. Thus he decided that there was an irreconcilable conflict between his doctrines and the intuitions those doctrines were supposed to clarify and organize.¹³¹

Likewise, the practice today of rich countries poaching healthcare workers from poorer countries and the overtness whereby wealthy countries with tightly controlled immigration respond to refugee crises in other countries by first allowing doctors and

¹³¹ Lampe 6

nurses refugee status suggests that the cosmopolitan question of hospitality itself is shot through by physical desires for healing. Therefore, the decision to focus on the Cyrenaics in this chapter is important to outline. On the one hand, Tsouna identifies in Cyrenaic epistemology proximity to modern philosophical skepticisms from Descartes on but with important qualifications.

From a systemic point of view, the Cyrenaic doctrine introduced a form of subjectivism which in some ways appears to pre-announce the subjectivism of Descartes, as endorsed by Malebranche and Hume and developed by Kant. [...] In contrast to the moderns, the Cyrenaics assumed that empirical objects exist and that they act upon us in various ways. Nevertheless, their skepticism, more than any other epistemological position in antiquity, resembles what modern philosophy calls skepticism about the external world.¹³²

The premise, therefore, is that by honing in on those philosophical currents of the pre-imperial Mediterranean which most resemble the dominant philosophers of today's academic-poetic edifice, we might highlight the notable ways in which contemporary political-philosophical poetics rhetorically insist on a certain spatial and temporal imaginary whose orientation is assured less by their epistemology and more by their poetic reliance on a state of nature aesthetic, on the one hand, or philosophy as political critique, on the other, for their conceptions about political possibility.

Secondly, Cyrenaic cosmopolitanism, as described above in its temporality of presentism and in its attentiveness to pleasure's indeterminacy and possibility, provides a productive space for undoing the poetics current and categories which appear more than any disciplinary apparatus to govern the terms of what philosophical positions are

¹³² Tsouna 65

of political import for thinking the problem of international space and coexistence other than through the spatial parameters commonly deployed. This second point, with its emphasis on presentism which is at the heart of Cyrenaic ethics and its corollary “loose” self, as Zilioli describes it, can thereby become grounds for populating our political discussions with a multi-lingual poetics and allowing to pass across the frontiers of academic disciplines those voices who might otherwise be condemned to historical interest without political import. The importance of Cyrenaic presentism and the cosmopolitanism of Aristippian poesis will come out in the final chapter dedicated to the exploration of the theory of international peace and diplomacy articulated by one of Kant’s 18th century contemporaries who lived in Timbuktu and who at the same time of increased global interconnection was positing a theory wholly different from Kant’s and yet arguable more productive for thinking about the cosmopolitan problematic.

In order to really grapple with this last point, it is important to better situate Cyrenaica historically and to explain the reference to creolity in the title of this essay. Rather than imagining creolity as hybridity between two distinct cultures whose contact engenders intermingling and transference of linguistic and symbolic elements; creolity might best be understood in terms of what Glissant has described as ‘vertiginous variances’.¹³³ Bernal shows that Greek language and material culture were—like all languages as Glissant reminds us—the products of multiple origins, yet those origins were not being catalogued in museums as such. To posit Cyrenaic creolity, therefore, is not necessarily to situate Cyrenaica or Cyrenaic thought on the liminal periphery

¹³³ Edouard Glissant (2010) *Poetics of Relation*. trans. Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 107.

between the properly Greek world and the African hinterland. Rather, it situates Cyrenaica as a site that is traversed by broad-ranging poetic and symbolic currents whose spatial overlappings and origins are so extensive that rendering them identifiably Greek vis-à-vis non-Greek is revealed as being more reiterative of a particular sensibility for a pan-Hellenism as articulated in Herodotus's pursuit for Hellenic solidarity among Peloponnesian Greeks and Ionian Greeks for the purpose of summoning the former's interest in rolling back Persian influence in Ionia. Our own interest in delineating ethnic difference distracts us from the creolity of Greek life on the one hand—as Greeks themselves evidently lived in recognition of many shared elements of religious life with Egyptians and the like; and, on the other hand, speculate about what the multilinguality of North Africa meant for the Greek philosophers like Aristippus who affiliated wisdom with the cosmopolitan practice of finding enjoyment amidst any company and assured us that the wise are defined by their ability to live unchanged even when all political laws are withdrawn. The important point is that creolity posits itself as a resilient alternative to the aesthetics of a state of nature as they are tirelessly invoked by modern theorists in justifying the need for the provisional order's maintenance/expansion, and likewise to the critical theorists who feel their works as directed really never arrive at their proper place of inhabitation—torn between the souls of princes and an abstract public.

Within the Cyrenaic movement, there were many alternative courses that could not be covered here, but to give a sense we should conclude with Hegesias. He focused

more on suffering in something of a Buddhist turn in the Cyrenaic movement. Diogenes Laertius gives us the following description of his school.

They denied the possibility of happiness, for the body is infected with much suffering, while the soul shares in the sufferings of the body and is a prey to disturbance, and fortune often disappoints. From all this it follows that happiness cannot be realized. Moreover, life and death are each desirable in turn. [...] They affirm that allowance should be made for errors, for no man errs voluntarily, but under constraint of some suffering; that we should not hate men, but rather teach among them (*metadidaxein*).¹³⁴

There was a recent archeological discovery of a Socratic dialogue from Ptolomaic Egypt written on a papyrus and wrapped around a mummy. Lampe and Spinelli¹³⁵ agree that, although we can never be certain, the most likely author of this dialogue is Hegesias, or one of his disciples. Hegesias was active in North Africa at the time, and the philosophical teachings that the text engenders match the teachings of Hegesias from other sources to a degree that is true of no other philosophical school, excepting perhaps the Epicurians, but they did not have a tradition of writing Socratic dialogues.¹³⁶ Here Socrates wrapped around this Ptolomaic mummy, Socrates offers his reason for not putting up a legal defense in his trial and the questioner responds as follows.

To you and me, Socrates, and to anyone who thinks that pleasure is the best end of life, and distress the worst, you would appear to have defended yourself well in all these matters, because you offered no defense regarding the death penalty. Other people, who posit that the fine and the fine life are the best end,

¹³⁴ DL I 223-5

¹³⁵ Lampe 136-9

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

and that the shameful and the shameful life are the worst, won't want to agree with us.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

IV. Second Interlude: Sophocles and the Syntax of the Loosely Aggregated Self

Felix Budelmann writes of Sophoclean language and of the unexpected turns of the dramatist's sentences; he describes the dramatist's sentences "go out of their way to make sure that spectators understand them and, at the same time, suggest that there is still more to be understood."¹³⁸ They accomplish this through enacting expectations that are then presented with an unexpected turn.¹³⁹ This feature of Sophoclean language negotiates something about language that can be problematic as it relates to philosophy and the *pathae*—a risk about language and the world which Budelmann describes as follows:

The risk of sentences that point at themselves is that they appear not to point at anything else. They are in danger of suggesting that there is nothing apart from the words of the sentence; that is why their rhetoric is often called empty. Sophocles' sentences, whose beginnings so often give wrong clues about their continuation, make it easy to believe that they react to something in the world...By not pointing at themselves to the degree that Gorgias' sentences do, they may seem to point at something that there is beyond their words."¹⁴⁰

Their poetics enact this through sentences that are unpredictable yet often lucid; "they are unpredicable and therefore often appear to reflect the equally unpredictable world beyond them."¹⁴¹ These linguistic turns, in Budelmann's analysis, show

¹³⁸ Felix Budelmann (2000) *The Language of Sophocles: Communal, Communication and Involvement*. Cambridge University Press, 59.

¹³⁹ *ibid.* 23

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* 59

¹⁴¹ *ibid.* 92

Sophoclean poetics to perform the felt presence of “something that there is beyond words” and this is likewise intermixed with presences off-stage and otherwise inaccessible currents of emotion within characters themselves as *pathaec* aspects of a self which fails to conform with Gorgias’s manner of speaking and with the linearity and explicit referentiality of Gorgias’s thought. The affair—*pragma*—of language and characters on the stage—as spectacle—tends, through Sophoclean syntax with its fragmented interlacing of imageries and unpredictable turns, to enact involvement by spectators by building expectations amidst supple unexpected turns.¹⁴² The language thereby conjures a world into the lives of the characters’ voices and into the scene as visited by and imbricated in the indeterminacy of that present world. These openings for *pathaec* involvement result, for Budelmann, in the possibility of communal experience through the shared conjunction of multiple presences—on and off stage as well as within and outside of language—drawn together in shared spectacles of unpredicable interconnection and turns. Spectators who share the emotive flux that the twists and turns of Sophoclean language produce may not share it in the same way and yet they share it, sparking at times an imprecise but felt need for collective action.¹⁴³

The ‘theres’ outside the self-referentiality of language, of the characters, and of their appearances on the visible stage are the stuff of a Sophoclean syntactical production. These ‘theres’ are not a world or cosmos but a scene as indeterminate *pragma*, wherein the acute presence of those elements of ‘there’ and of their

¹⁴² *ibid.* Budelmann uses involvement as a central feature of his analysis

¹⁴³ *ibid.* 194 Spectator ‘involvement’ is the word Budelmann focuses on, and also see the chapter, “The chorus: Shared survival” (*ibid.* 195-272) on the chorus’s role in rendering the form of this collective action in terms of the *demos* though still somewhat imprecisely defined in this regard.

unpredictable influence on the current of events as shared spectacle—through the supple linguistic turns—cast these enacting elements of ‘there’ as interconnected loosely, and as presently loose connection with future outcomes. This is important in the context of this book as it puts in relief the singularity of the Plotinian ‘there’ of the singular cosmic eternal Being. Recall from the first interlude, Plotinus’s language of eternal intelligible being; the ‘here’ and the ‘there’ juxtaposition is Plotinus’s signature formula repeated consistently. These were Plotinus’s routine spatial referents in his juxtaposition of that eternally proximate presence of Being emanating in the world with the chronological time of the self’s fragmented impressions of that formal world.

Recall from the first interlude that Plotinus’s and Porphyry’s lives in philosophy were also visited by depression. This possibility of depression was easily curable in both cases, but it came in the way of a need to move, a tendency toward a peregrination that philosophy could not remedy as static contemplation and Plotinian visualization. Plotinus came to Ammonius after leaving those teachers in Alexandria whose teaching precipitated a depression. When he left Ammonius, it was to go visit with the philosophers of Persia and India. About the details of this we know very little. But when Porphyry suffered his suicidal depression, Plotinus sends him away to travel—to peregrinate—perhaps to find some beauty that was not the pure beauty of the ‘there’ of pure Being, but rather of a more concrete chronological ‘out there’. This ‘there’ of the eternal intelligible realm in Plotinus—as presented in the second interlude of this book, which was emanating in the plenitude of the cosmos and elementally agglomerated with the chronological *psyche*, appears to not have always been close enough. Something

like a movement—a movement to a more realizable ‘out there’; or perhaps even a ‘not here’ is what Porphyry needed. This appears to have been the non-philosophical antidote for this almost suicidal depression—a depression that Plotinus diagnosed well writ on Porphyry’s body without the young scholar ever making mention of it.

When we read in Felix Budelmann of how Sophoclean sentences—perhaps more effectively than Plotinus’s ‘visualization exercises’¹⁴⁴—manage to manifest a ‘there’ that is both a beyond the spectacle of the stage and a beyond the language of origination; this is an important philosophical opening for considering the poetic. The poetic may likewise be understood, in this interlude on Sophocles, as akin to the translation from the previous chapter on the Cyrenaic phrase—‘*tae poetika taes haedonaes*’ translated as ‘the enacting elements of pleasure’, or ‘the poetics of pleasure’ which, indeterminate as they were, the Cyrenaics refused to categorize. Poetics here means ‘the enacting elements’ in the Sophoclean drama’s infusion of *pathaec* flux across spectators in the language of a singular scene to which they are all connected. The enacting elements of Sophoclean language bring something more than the static image that the Plotinian visual imagery of an illuminated cosmos conjured for his pupils in a quest to present a ‘there’ of the cosmic order connecting the thread of *psyche* to an entirety of all present beauty. Sophoclean language enacts something that the Cyrenaics would have recognized as a *pathae*—an internal movement and not an image as with Plotinus. Sophoclean language, in this regard, may have more capacity for healing—political,

¹⁴⁴ Rappe, 260

spiritual, physical etc.—than Plotinian poesis. Sophocles’s ‘there’ was more inflected in the ‘here’ as *pathaec* currents of imaginal reverie.

Through Felix Budelmann’s insights into Sophoclean language, this essay looks at a few sentences which Budelmann does not explore, sentences here that present the dramatic self in Sophoclean tragedy as akin to the Cyrenaic ‘loose self’ of Zilioli as presented in the previous chapter.¹⁴⁵ Recall from the previous chapter that Cyrenaic hedonist ethics developed a temporal disposition of ‘monochronality’—or a life that pursues the present temporal moment and its potential for pleasurable experience or possibility for suffering. This was favored over the abstract wholeness of a eudaimonist “good life” which, for the Cyrenaics, tends to border on a quasi-meaningless aggregation. A good life for them must mean pleasures—*plural*—as experienced in a present which is always singular as experience yet dialogic and multiply participatory. Beyond whatever similarity the Sophoclean self shares with the Cyrenaic ‘loose self’, Sophocles poeticizes selves of multiple temporalities through his dramatic poetics, and this in ways that require attending to. The dramatic and divine of Sophocles’s characters are inflected in the singular movement of the scene by multiple temporal and strewn affective elements that seem to loosely connects these in what we might call an attentiveness linguistically to the perforations of loosely aggregated selves—perforations that are often the locus where action morphs into the world. How then is the multitemporality of the Sophoclean loose self posed in a singular scene that tends toward monochronal experience for its audience? To examine this, a few examples of

¹⁴⁵ Zilioli 2012

Sophoclean language are treated here with attentiveness to Budelmann's insight into syntax and the audience's involvement. But here Sophoclean syntax is treated with an emphasis on temporality and the consequences of the scene's multiple temporalities as they are interwoven in the monochronality of the scene with its indeterminate connections to future outcomes.

The first sentence is from *Antigone*. It is from the scene where Antigone is contemplating her course of action. She is mourning her fallen brother Polynices and going back and forth with Ismene, her sister, about what she will do. Specifically, she is contemplating carrying out the illegal burial and funerary rights of her brother, and this would be in defiance of Creon and is punishable by death. To Ismene:

ἀλλ' ἴσθ' ὅποια σοι δοκεῖ, κείνον δ' ἐγὼ
Then be as you must, and in that case I
θάψω. καλόν μοι τοῦτο ποιοῦση θανεῖν
shall bury him. It would be beautiful for me to die in such an act
φίλῃ μετ' αὐτοῦ κείσομαι, φίλου μέτα,
I, beloved, beside him, shall lay in rest, he, beloved, beside ...
ὅσια πανουργήσας· ἐπεὶ πλείων χρόνος
A holy enactment. Since I will spend more time
ὄν δεῖ μ' ἀρέσκειν τοῖς κάτω τῶν ἐνθάδε.¹⁴⁶
below, I'll have more time to win favor down there than here.

So in these four lines, Antigone inserts two odd words at a critical moment when her sentence fails to complete itself in the words expected. She moves through her featured argument from the decision to bury her brother, then to contemplation of the

¹⁴⁶ All Greek citations of Sophocles are from the two volume corpus of Sophocles issued by the Leob Classical Library series and all translations are mine; Sophocles (1994) *Antigone*. in *Sophocles Vol. I-II*. trans. Hugh Lloyd-Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 71-75. Hereafter cited Sophocles, volume number, lines.

beauty of such a pious act and death, then to her love for her brother, and then to the afterlife being longer than this one in its continuation as juridical and moral affair. She does not imply that the gods will necessarily be happy for her act; just that she will have more time to make her case and win their favor in Hades than she will with the people of Thebes. However, the interesting moment in these lines comes at the end of the second line and the beginning of the third. Antigone ends the second line above with a preposition, *meta*, that has no object, and interjects a very odd phrase in the beginning of the next line as its object. *Hosia panourgasasa* is translated here as ‘a holy enactment’ or literally ‘a holy all-doing’. This is divine temporality inflected into the character and into the current of her sentence and of the scene in an unexpected syntactical turn.

The second line calls Antigone ‘*philae*’ and her brother ‘*philos*’ establishing a kind of mutual symmetry; she claims that they are destined to lie side by side in mutual love—both symmetrically dead in a mirroring of their symmetrical affection. The repetition of the preposition *meta* would likewise repeat that symmetry except it goes unfulfilled. The line and the thought end asymmetrically and unexpectedly. She ‘*philae*’ rests with him ‘*autou*’, but he ‘*philou*’ “is with ...” The line is finished, but the sentence is not. It leaves you hanging. You insert automatically Antigone as the object of the preposition, ‘*meta*’. The line is not ambiguous, but it takes an unexpected turn. Nor is there any double meaning. Rather, the symmetry of the thought of her lying dead in mutual affection with Polynices is broken by the image of this divine action that renders their position—hers and Polynices—asymmetrical in the way of a present amorphous entanglement. She is alive, and so this entanglement is hers and not Polynices’s but is

also Ismene's, Creon's, the chorus's and the gods'. At the very moment when the sentence leads the audience to expect a word that refers to herself as the object of *meta*—'a holy all-doing' is what they hear instead as Antigone's eyes light up. No one in the Athenian audience would have missed this as a moment of divine interjection into the course of the affair.

Right at this strange unpredictable perforated moment, these words revisit the inadequacy of a judgment's accounting for everything that is going into this decision. Even in Hades the case appears open, so the temporality of Antigone's own eternity and of her accounting for this action is, then, compared to the civil judgment here, but these are imbricated since whatever the course of judgment 'there' will likewise come back 'here'. This broken-off statement that morphs into something else, something divine, in the next line transforms this character for an instant into the mouthpiece for the ethical imaginary inflected with the indeterminacy but acute presence of divine judgment's relevance for the 'here'. Every Athenian would have known that these words were the whisperings into Antigone's mind of a divine deed that she is to carry out. It would be at this precise and unexpected turn in the scene and in this sentence when the audience would hear themselves saying 'get ready we are in for it!' The debate in Antigone's mind is over; the gods are now driving this. Juxtapositions fail to account for the multiple entanglements of the affairs of kinship, divine endeavor, political rivalry and purpose; therefore rather than painting this asymmetry as a broad juxtaposition between laws of kinship, piety and state, the questions of sisterhood and of Polynices's political life continued by divine means are given over to an indeterminacy felt in the present

unfolding and inflected by multiple temporalities of imaginal and poetic force behind the act determined to happen. What survives, however, is ethically indeterminate and, in this action contemplated, inhumanly so. Antigone's excitement at the idea of transgression—a *panourgaesasa*, an 'all-doing', as opposed to a *parrhaessia*, an 'all-telling'. An all-telling is a feature of the human perhaps, but an all-doing is unmistakably unique to the gods. This contemplation/image-act/discussion is an affair of the self and its image of singularity of present action as entanglement made with regard to Ismene also Creon also *Aïdos* also Polynices also Thebes but ultimately here transformed into as many currents from 'there'. Singular judgment is deferred in the way of an alternative temporal duration for her making her case of what moved her to this *hosia panourgaesasa*. And we will hear her later in the play beginning to make her case before the gods as she is bound and marched to her death. The presence and yet alterity of what eternity's judgment may favor over the judgment of the 'here' comes to be felt as juxtaposed but also imbricated and indeterminate in its ethicality and consequences. Yet all of these loose ends are spanned by a single scene and moment as interconnection of this deliberated 'holy deed' and drawn forward with the anticipation of Antigone winning her case in *Aïdos* in which case — watch out Thebes. The play unfolds to produce the entanglement of both the 'here' and 'there' of judgment's inadequacy and likewise of political rule in the form of law. Shortly, Creon makes his arrogant claim that a people only come to see the wisdom of their ruler when that ruler makes his wisdom manifest in his law. Sophocles's poetics break the linearity of the syntactical progression and perforate the scene with alternative temporal and trans-spatial aspects that distribute

judgment in ways that dramatize the irreconcilability of law's form as edict with the singularity of the act and the possibility of judging it's repercussions.

Later in the play after Antigone has committed this holy transgression of burying her brother and been condemned, we find Antigone beginning to make her case before the gods. The affective language is nothing short of thrilling for the audience, and likewise the turn in a particular sentence would have had that audience covered in goose bumps as their imaginations of what would unfold from the gods who assuredly watched alongside them and assuredly were being riled into a fury. This audience would have felt Antigone's words and known without a doubt that the gods will not be unmoved by this.

ὦν λαισθία ἔγω καὶ κάκιστα δὴ μακρῶ
As last, I am likewise most wretched by far
κάτειμι, πρὶν μοι μοῖραν ἐξήκειν βίου.
descending thus before the final end of life for me.
ἐλθουσα μέντοι κάρτ' ἐν ἐλπίσιν τρέφω
But on returning there, I grow resilient with courage in hopes
φίλη μὲν ἤξιεν πατρί, προσφιλὴς δὲ σοί,
of endearment to my father and of dearness to you,
μητέρα, φίλη δὲ σοί, κασίγνητον κάρα.
mother, and to be dear to you, brother above all.
ἐπεὶ θανόντας αὐτόχειρ ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ
Upon your deaths, my very hands both washed
ἔλουσα κακόσμησα καπιτυμβίους
the filth from each of you and upon your graves
χοᾶς ἔδωκα. νῦν δέ, Πολύνεικες, τὸ σὸν
offered libations. And now, Polynices, for the
δέμας περιστέλλουσα, τοιάδ' ἄρηνυμαι.
shrouding of your body, this is my reward.
καίτοι σ' ἐγὼ ἔτιμησα τοῖς φρονοῦσιν εὔ.

And yet I honored you by those of sound judgment.
 οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὐτ' ἄν εἰ τέκν' ὦν μήτηρ ἔφυν
 Such would not have happened were it my own child;
 οὐτ' εἰ πόσις μοι κατθανὼν ἐτήκετο,
 nor, were my husband struck down and wasting away,
 βία πολιτῶν τόνδ' ἄν ἠρόμην πόνον.
 would, in the life of the citizens, this work have been sown.
 τίνος νόμου δὴ ταῦτα πρὸς χάριν λέγω;
 For the sake of what law indeed do I declare these things?
 πόσις μὲν ἄν μοι κατθανόντος ἄλλος ἦν,
 For were mine husband struck down so yet take another,
 καὶ παῖς ἀπ' ἄλλου φωτός, εἰ τοῦδ' ἤμπλακον,
 and likewise bear child with another, if this one were stricken;
 μητρὸς δ' ἐν Αἴδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιιν
 but with my mother and father hidden away in Hades
 οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἀνβλαστοὶ ποτέ.
 there is no brother who ever could be born.
 τοιῶδε μέντοι σ' ἐκπροτιμήσας' ἐγὼ
 Having honored you above all by this steadfast
 νόμῳ, Κρέοντι ταῦτ' ἔδοξ' ἀμαρτάνειν
 law, to Creon these things appear as transgressions
 καὶ δεινὰ τολμᾶν, ὦ κασίγνητον κάρα.¹⁴⁷
 and as horrors enduring - oh brother above all.

Sophoclean characters, as loosely aggregated subjects, inhabit thick time of quickening divine and human currents, and this in language and through the singular spectacle of the scene. Treating Antigone in her elemental existence—in the poetics of the author and in the imaginaries of his audience in Athens—shows the interplay of temporal imaginaries and ethicality's interwovenness by divine projection through the poetic spectacle of the unfolding affair, the *pragma*. Here Antigone's lament to her

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.* 895-915

brother in this passage deploys a curious phrase on two occasions—*kasignaeton karâ*—meaning ‘brother above all’. But this is the exact same phrase from *Oedipus Tyrannus* where, in the opening of the play, Oedipus is addressed as ‘*kratiston pâsin Oidipou karâ*’ — ‘most powerful of all Oedipus above all’. This ominous phrase from the opening of that play would have been crystal clear in the memory of the audience in Athens. The repetition in this passage on two occasions of Antigone addressing her brother with this unique title, *kapâ*, would have conjured immediately the reference to the divine destiny of the great house of Cadmus. Every single Athenian, upon hearing this phrase now in *Antigone*, would instantly have recognized that Antigone is not just talking to her brother. She is conjuring the memory of the divine interest in the house of Cadmus. She does not even use the simple term for brother, *adelphos*, nor of *kasis*, but makes explicit reference to the lineage in calling him ‘*kasignaeton*’ — literally ‘brother of the lineage’. Twice she repeats this like a refrain, and you can be sure that everyone in that audience knew that whatever she was saying ‘here’ on this stage was right at the center of the gods’ interests, deliberations and *pathae*.

When readers today speculate about Antigone’s apparent filial piety as central to her ethics, and ask why she appears to disown kinship loyalty with regard to any replaceable member of her family, they miss the point. Antigone knows that this is not about her or her family. She is expressing reverence to the divine scheme that she endured with honor. If this was just about her, she would not put the citizenry through this affair that is about to unfold. When she says this, she is performing her humility in a speech that she knows the gods are listening to. She is telling them that I am not so bold

as to think that my life is above that of the city. I am respecting the law of honor and your divine interest in the fate of the line of Cadmus. This is about Thebes and Cadmus. She must make it explicitly clear to the gods: this is your affair. This is about the divine plan that she, Antigone, always accepted her role in and did so with reverence for the gods. She would have likely even had a dream where she was told that she must fulfill the funerary rites of the line of Oedipus by burying Polynices. The citizenry of Athens probably would have even assumed this dream had occurred. Of course, Antigone does not declare this on the stage publicly to anyone; you do not share your dreams haphazardly when gods come to you; especially not a dream like this lest someone tell one of the other gods what events are being planned. Here Antigone is conjuring the line of Cadmus and recounting, in this wretched state of her being bound and marched to death, each and every member of that line of *karâ* that she with her own hands ritually purified out of honor for the gods in their conducting of the fate of this great and tragic line. The irreplaceability of her brother is a reference to the political battle of the house of Cadmus which now has no one to replace it. She knows this spectacle will not leave the gods unmoved. Antigone is saying, 'okay you guys, finish this.'

The ambiguity that punctuates this passage comes in the last line—'*Kreonti taut' edoxa hamartanein kai deina tolman, ô kassignaeton kara*'. It translates literally as follows: 'For Creon these things, it appears, transgress and horrors (*deina*) endure. The beauty of the line is that the impersonal verb *edoxa* 'it appears or seems that' invites Creon's invocation in the dative again after *tolman*—meaning in the second stanza, "it also appears for Creon that horrors endure or persist". As Budelmann points out, the twists

and turns of these sentences generate expectation and then move in different directions without losing coherence but rather by pointing elsewhere—to the world and its almost/ already present becoming. Instead of saying, ‘Creon considers these things to transgress’; Antigone declares the following: ‘honoring you [Polynices] above all in this steadfast law, for Creon it appears that these things transgress, and that horrors persist, oh brother atop all!’ By loading Creon right after law and placing the verb, *edoxa*, in the impersonal, the syntax of the sentence can also be fulfilled by—in the second instance—referencing Creon to the horrors that persist *in that they persist for Creon*, treating Creon in the dative as a dative of respect with the impersonal verb, *edoxa*, necessarily repeated and governing both infinitive verbs *tolmân* as well as *hamartanein*—i.e., it appears that these horrors (*deina*) will persist (*tolmân*) with respect to Creon.

The wisdom of a ruler does not appear to manifest in his laws anymore. There are more ethical motivations at work here than legislation can account for. *Kara*—the head—the son of Oedipus; his law also—as divinely inscribed—manifests but illegibly. As honor’s imperative is the law of the gods, this law of honor is likewise indeterminate. It requires dreams and attentiveness to sort ethical forces out in the world, and still nothing is secured in the end. Earlier in the passage, Antigone’s courage was steadfast (*mentoi*) in its hope for rekindled love with her family. Now the law of honoring the irreplaceable head of the great house of Cadmus is steadfast (*mentoi*), and the open-ended question of how the horrors will endure and play out is cast out into the unfolding drama. Therefore, the steadfastness of the law of honoring is drawing the impossibility of divine indifference amidst other conjurings from this passage’s poetics.

Likewise it suggests through supple twists that for Creon it appears something—in the way of horrors—also endures. The Athenian audience, amidst the political infighting and reprisals of Sophocles’s time, would have absolutely understood what the stakes of bestowing these divine rituals on the fallen nobility of a political movement were for their own futures.

When Antigone says, ‘It appears *to Creon* that these transgress and that horrors persist’; there is a syntactical tension to the way the sentence plays out, and it is punctuated by her conjuring her fallen brother as ‘above all’. In Creon’s mind, the horrors persist due to the transgression, so punishing Antigone will rectify it; this is sort of how the sentence takes off. But when it ends with a different infinitive for which the impersonal verb and Creon in the dative apply, then the sentence’s ambiguity is felt retrospectively to be saying ‘*For Creon* it appears that these things transgress and it appears that horrors persist *for Creon*.’ So rhetorically—through the expectations built into the sentence that summarize Creon’s belief that this must be punished and cannot be forgiven—the syntax of the sentence ends by suggesting, “Do you really think this affair is going to go away with me? Do you think the law of honor is less than Creon’s law of accountability and punishment?” The steadfastness of the law of honor is directed at the gods. Antigone is not engaging in a philosophical position about filial piety. Expectations would have had everyone in that audience in Athens with goose bumps as they felt like the gods were right there beside them watching, and riveted as Antigone punctuates this sentence with “oh my brother of the lineage above all!”

Antigone then proceeds to speak of how she is suffering death by execution and mourns her miserable position. All of this because she followed the law of honoring: “Is this beautiful?” she appears to be asking the gods. “This cannot really be how this divine plan ends can it?” She makes her case that she was not driven out of hubris and insists that she would have never made the entire polity suffer because of her husband or child or whatever personal family matter. She is reminding the gods that this was Oedipus’s son, and that this, gods, is your drama. You are not going to let it end this way right? And she finishes by humbly reminding the gods that they are not above judgment and especially with regard to the law of honor. But again still humbly she tells them that all is forgiven and so suggests that she is not so bold as to imply that her judgment is of any consequence for them.

ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν οὖν τὰδ' ἐστὶν ἐν θεοῖς καλὰ,
Rather if these things are beautiful for the gods,
(i.e., my being bound and killed husbandless and childless for following the
law of honor)
παθόντες ἄν ξυγγοῖμεν ἡμαρτηκότες.
Suffering for my having sinned, I would forgive.
εἰ δ' οἶδ' ἁμαρτάνουσι, μὴ πλείω κακὰ
But if they are sinning, let not they more evils
πάθοιεν ἢ καὶ δρῶσιν ἐκδίκως ἐμε.¹⁴⁸
suffer than those they visited unjustly upon me.

Antigone knows the power of the present image of what she is being made to suffer. She knows that the gods see what is happening to her. Her own infatuation with the thought of her defiance earlier in the drama was poeticized in a manner that drew the spectators, through a turn in the sentence, to sense her rapt enchantment with the

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.* 925-929

image of herself as enacting 'a holy deed'. At that moment it was judged beautiful (*kalos*) were she to die for that deed. Now she is asking, are these things beautiful in the eyes of the gods? But the whole question of beauty, in light of the unfinished accounting in Thebes, is indeterminate in the present. That the gods may be judged accordingly should remind them of what they themselves visited in the world.

On the one hand, we know that this "law" was not entirely sufficient in explaining why she did what she did. It seemed, in her earlier deliberation, that there was a lot more going on that one law could account for. Yet, on the other hand, that she should posit such a seemingly over-reductive law is not just a reflection of her own doubts about what her motivations were. Antigone's confession of her law is also the undoing of Creon's earlier statement that a ruler's character can never be known until we witness his laws and government. Antigone's law suggests to us that law itself is never adequate to the forces at play in a world, forces that issue in and across us. They are spontaneously intertwined. Events like the long-duree of political feud are never wholly explicable or accounting in their spontaneous formation as singular momentary judgment/action.

V. The Poesis of Mukhtarian Cosmopolitanism and Diplomatic Meliorism

Al Sa'di of Timbuktu wrote the following in 1613 on the cosmopolitanism of Kunburu and of refugees in Jenne:

Sultan Kunburu [...] told them to call upon God Most High to grant the city three things: firstly, that anyone who fled there from his homeland in poverty and distress should have this translated by God into luxury and ease, so that he may forget his homeland; secondly, that more strangers than local folk should settle there; and thirdly, that those who came to trade there should lose patience and grow weary over selling their goods, and so dispose of them cheaply, allowing the people of Jenne to make a profit. They recited the *Fatiha* over these three requests, and they were accepted by God. To this day their efficacy may be observed and witnessed.¹⁴⁹

Perhaps the best way to introduce Sidi al Mukhtar ibn Ahmed al Kunti in the context of this book would be to reintroduce the couplet that prefaced the first interlude on Plotinus. This time it is paired with the couplet that follows, so as to complete the thought of the anonymous poet whom al Kunti is citing.

Time is a garment so be of its fabric — With a day as its cloak it gathers and forms
And be swiftest when among the swift — and when among fools, be most foolish¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ *Tarikh as-Soudan* by 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa'di trans. John O. Hunwick. (2003) *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire*. Boston: Brill Press, 18-9.

¹⁵⁰ Sidi al Mukhtar al-Kunti *Risalah fi ikhmad al-fitan bayn al-qaba'il* Ms. 13. Hereafter cited *Al-Kunti Risalah* Ms. pagination. The digitized folios of the manuscript of Mukhtar al Kunti's treatise on diplomacy are available at the World Digital Library website under the title, "A Letter to the Warring Tribes." World Digital Library—at least in their digital West African manuscript collection—does not have very many or even very accurate details. I have, therefore, chosen to maintain title by which the manuscript is listed in Mahamoudou's chapter; he lists the work under the following Arabic title *Risala min al-shaykh Sayyid al-Mukhtar fi ikhmad al-fitan bayn al-qaba'il*. Mahamane. Mahamoudou (2008) "The Works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti" *The Meaning of Timbuktu* (eds. S. Jeppi and S. B. Diagne) Dakar: CODESRIA, 227. Only the first forty-nine pages of the manuscript are available on the World Digital Library site. I have only had access to this digital copy, and do not know if the rest of the manuscript is available. The link to the digitized manuscript as cited in this paper is as follows:
<http://www.wdl.org/en/item/199/#q=mali&qia=en>

This is a surprising follow up to what is an otherwise very rich image of time in the first couplet about time. It is as if this poet he is citing goes from a quasi-Plotinian image of time to a quasi-Aristippian ethics of sociability in all contexts. This picture of time and of its tendency toward being fabric—always a textured but inter-folded day—requires something inescapable of you that may at times go against your sensibilities unless you are attentive. Diplomacy does this too; it requires suspending your sensibilities and any visceral responses to affairs that operate in the temporality of immediacy. You are swift not to be swift but because the day demanded something you did not expect. If the end here is peace, it must not be projected into the future as abstract goal so much as uncovered in the fabric of the present day as part of mind's life in it. This is a theory of peace grounded in the present, a present dissimulated from both the immediate and the teleological.

This presentism is also about the multiple temporalities of the self in the overlapping of its political and affective existences. It is about how our focus on multiple temporal horizons in the present's indeterminacy may allow for a disposition of meliorism to unfold in the presence of a day. For this thesis to have political import requires of its author some philosophical presentation of the mind and some poetic movement whereby the audience imagines or intuits this vision of the mind; and this in a way that mind's temporal contours and powers may bear those features that lend themselves to diplomatic peace.

The treatise begins with a single political question: “where does the resilience (*‘izm*) of authority (*al ‘umur*) come from?”¹⁵¹ The answer is that it comes through diplomacy, and this is especially so in moments of crisis. For this question of political resilience and authority—the question he knows every political actor with ambition attends to, the author has no theological end to posit no set of ontological, legal or jurisprudential maxims. No teleological deferral in favor of a historical unity. (In fact he takes the historiological claim of progressive time from Islamic historiography with relation to pre-Islamic *jahiliyya*—and roundly refutes it, positing instead that the age of *jahiliyya* has no past to it: all *jahiliyya* refers to is the situation of nations fighting each other out of zealotry and fanaticism).¹⁵² Authority, he claims, comes from diplomacy and successful diplomacy can only be through forgiveness and patient perseverance. And these practices can only be enacted through the powers of a mind that applies itself to the multiple temporalities of itself as given to varying modes of visceral anger, patient forbearance, temperance in cleverness etc... All of these aspects of the *psyche* as alternative modalities of the self have varying temporal horizons. Through diverse practices of mind, there comes the possibility of accommodating the changing fabrics of each days existence.

The word al Kunti uses for diplomacy is *madarat al siyasi*—literally the political affair, but the context is given in terms that we would recognized as diplomacy. As when

¹⁵¹ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 1

¹⁵² “*Jahiliyya* is the condition when a nation battles another nation out of fanaticism and zealotry” Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 1

he says, “Be good to the one whose evil is feared; that is diplomacy.”¹⁵³ Mind and attention to the plasticity of an indeterminate present will be his response to the international challenges of his day. The poetics presented in this manuscript the site where al Kunti brokered important international peace deals like the one in 1771.¹⁵⁴ Al Kunti’s presentism here focuses his audience on the indeterminate present whose connection with the future is yet a loose one and conducive to meliorist dispositions, but the possibility of political amelioration requires that people overly consolidated visions of self in order accommodate to multiple threads of the fabric of the day as it presents their interwovenness. The poetics and logic presented here are likewise intent on aestheticizing the viscosity of emotive life and of the embodied mind’s capacities for managing emotions. Many of the visualization exercises here speak of gulping down anger,¹⁵⁵ and he cites Muhyiddin ibn al ‘Arabi as saying glory is not a fruit that you can just enjoy.¹⁵⁶ The stomach is elsewhere a place for depositing visceral reactions of immediacy that the mind needs to suppress.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 9

¹⁵⁴ Mawlay al Qasim cites the year 1771 as the year that Al Kunti came to Timbuktu and brokered a peace deal between the Arma and Kel Tadmekket. Arma is the plural in Arabic for Romans *al rûm* sg.; these are a Byzantine-style class administrators whose administration controlled many of the urban centers. Chronique de Mawlay al-Qasim (1982) in *Tombouctou au milieu du XVIIIe Siècle* (ed. M. Abitbol) G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose, texte arab de Mawlay al-Qasim, 8; also see Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh (2008) “The Works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti” *The Meaning of Timbuktu* (eds. S. Jeppie and S. B. Diagne) Dakar: CODESRIA, 234 for details of the political dispute

¹⁵⁵ “Al Hajjaj asked of Ibn al Qaria: “What is prudence?” and he replied: “That you gulp the narrowness [of a situation] until you achieve the opportunity” Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 35

¹⁵⁶ Citing poetry of ibn al ‘Arabi, “Do not count glory as a fruit that you might eat — You will not attain glory until you lick the dish of patient perseverance.” Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 9

¹⁵⁷ “My stomach is what guards me from such anger, for I want not that it should express from itself outwardly a thing that it hates and loathes.” Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 31

Fault lies in appetite, dread, desire and anger.¹⁵⁸

The intensification of anger narrows vision, cuts away at the substance of competence and disjoins the imagination.¹⁵⁹

There are those whose anger engulfs them, and that leads to bloodshed with them committing what is heinous. In this no one is worse than those religious authorities, particularly those of the Sultan's court, whose command penetrates.¹⁶⁰

Locating al Mukhtar al Kunti in the context of the temporal imaginaries and of the poetics of space and time that preceded this chapter might mean thinking of his poetics in relation to the presentisms of Plotinus and Aristippus. Poetically al Kunti will just undo the possibility for any genre barrier to be placed between poetry and philosophy, and this in a way that also finds cause to present his thought in the company of Sophocles. Also like Sophocles, in his time, Al Kunti knows that political ambition has no formal resolution, and in my reading the problem that al Kunti is really addressing through his poetics of presentism is the following. Given ambition's inherent tendency to visualize an end for itself, and given the impossibility of absolving ambition from the world, how do you render its teleological gaze more blurred. How do you upset the facile clarity with which ambition posits its course of action in favor of a kind of referral of ambition to something supple and ambient. This is why he introduces ibn al 'Arabi's thought about glory, the image of glory is often too lucid and facile in the minds of the ambitious. How do you aesthetically shift focus along an alternative temporal course

¹⁵⁸ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 30

¹⁵⁹ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 30

¹⁶⁰ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 33

than this clear course that the ambitious mind imagines for itself singularly? Al Kunti suggests you do this by focusing on the present and in so doing inviting into that present space a host of suppressed and rich images. This has the effect of rendering the present much more indeterminate and in turn this imaginably upsets that facile course of action as visualized in the mind of the ambitious one by making it look less facile given this renewed panorama of the present.

Poetics of Multilingual Spaces and the Pliability of the Political

The extent of the text's perforation with couplets of the anonymous poets and of other sayings anonymously attributed alongside stories of ethics, politics and diplomacy invites many voices into the present and with it a world that would appear less compliant to visions of exclusivity. Al Kunti repeatedly cites these anonymous 'wise ones' and 'elders' as well as the poetry and prose of well known political figures and philosophers like al-Ghazali and Muhyiddin ibn al 'Arabi—whom he cites by name on two occasions. But he never chooses between their very different theologies or stages a debate.

In his life, his political disposition was never to dream of a philosopher city, nor did he lend his presence readily at court; in this manuscript, he disparages the scholars who frequent the courts of princes regularly. Instead, he lived in a small town well outside the city, and mediated peace deals while cultivating extensive pedagogical and

spiritual groups across an expanse of West African polities that was approximately as vast as Western Europe.¹⁶¹ His writings are prolific and on all manner of subjects.¹⁶²

Al Kunti's manuscript on diplomacy is linguistically and temporally constructed in a poetics of presentism; he aestheticizes the plasticity of the present and its meliorist possibility by inviting bodily imagery and a host of voices that undo the singularity of his own voice and the uniformity of the space in which he speaks. He would have spoken several languages in addition to Arabic: at the very least Tamasheq since he was raised until the age of fourteen in a Tamasheq-speaking village, and likewise Soninke from his time in Walata tending to the shrine there dedicated to the follower of al Jilani, Ahmed al Bakkay and receiving pilgrims there.¹⁶³ It is likely that he spoke Songhai as well since this was an important language in and around Timbuktu. He may not have known Hebrew but his commentaries on the stars reference what was said of them in the Torah.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the voices of these anonymous poets that proliferate in his text are drawn from a host of poetic traditions; they invite a rich imagery and an unimaginably vast crown of wise persona into his narrative in ways that undo rigid spatial distinctions of identity or culture etc...

¹⁶¹ Abdal-Aziz Batran (1973) "An Introductory Note on the Impact of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1729-1811) on West African Islam in the 18th and 19th Centuries" *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, 349; Batran (1974) "The Qadiriyya-Mukhtariyya Brotherhood in West Africa: The Concept of Tasawwuf in the Writings of Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1729-1811)" *Transafrican Journal of History* 4, 44

¹⁶² For an overview of his corpus see Mahamane Mahamoudou (2008) "The Works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti" *The Meaning of Timbuktu* (eds. S. Jeppie and S. B. Diagne) Dakar: CODESRIA

¹⁶³ For a detailed description of his life see Yahya Ould el-Bara (2008) "The Works of Shaykh Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti" *The Meaning of Timbuktu* (eds. S. Jeppie and S. B. Diagne) Dakar: CODESRIA.

¹⁶⁴ Mahamoudou, 213

Secondly, Al Kunti's thought destabilizes judgment across fixed jurisprudential categories as when he says the following.

The man that would be among the people of prayer, fasting and struggle will not be content at the day of his rising but insofar as he has applied his mind (*al 'aql*) to things.¹⁶⁵

In al Kunti's milieu there was a deep appreciation for those whose poetics could convey a rich indeterminacy and polysemies across languages. On traditions of pedagogy and textual interpretation of religious texts in the region where al Kunti's poetics and teachings traversed, Hélène Claudot-Hawad describes the Tamasheq-Berber poetics of translation.

I would mention the case of reinterpretations of the Qur'an into Berber according to analogies that are phonetic rather than semantic such as produce versions that lack any relation of signification to the original text. This kind of mischievous and iconoclastic pirating represents a difficult literary exercise capably performed by only those who have a perfect knowledge of the Qur'an and of Arabic.¹⁶⁶

The pedagogical and scholarly community to which al Kunti belonged also knew the value of irony and was not prone to Gorgias's self-referential language that fails to find anything outside of itself in the world.¹⁶⁷ Al Kunti's biographer recounts how he first attracted a notable following at an early age. The story goes that because of his young age but eminent reputation, a group of leading scholars sent him an exam of questions to see for themselves. Al Kunti sent his reply in the form of a satirical poem

¹⁶⁵ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 21

¹⁶⁶ Hélène Claudot-Hawad (1989) "Les Touareg ou la résistance d'une culture nomade" in *RE.M.M.M.* 51, 67. My translation.

¹⁶⁷ See Budelmann above in Second Interlude on Sophocles

containing all the responses, and this was celebrated by his examiners as evidence of his scholarly credentials.¹⁶⁸ In Batran's overview of his text on Islamic practice (*shari'a*), he points out that al Kunti tells his readers that there is another set esoteric teachings that are not written down and deliberately guarded by the people who understand them because "they may contradict the well-known precepts of the exoteric knowledge [presented here]".¹⁶⁹

These teachings are secret, but the fact that they can contradict the *shari'a* is something he deliberately mentions, and this to point out that they may contradict what teachings they are reading say. This is the kind of scholar he was; he is basically saying that according to another logic of thinking these rules I am telling you may be suspect. Without suggesting that the affair of esoteric and exoteric practice in this context is terribly transparent or as simple as my brief description here eludes to, yet it is safe to say that he felt that it was important to tell the people in his public text of *shari'a* that all of these rules may actually be contingent, or abridgeable, which is to say disputable under a higher logic. This he did not keep a secret. Perhaps people must be reminded of their rules' potential falsity.

In al Sa'di's of Timbuktu's history of the region *Tarikh al Sudan*, written around 1613, he refers to non-Muslims of the region as *maji*, the term mentioned in the Qur'an for acknowledging other non-Judeo-Christian faiths other than Islam.¹⁷⁰ In al Kunti's

¹⁶⁸ See Batran (1979) "The Kunta, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, and the Office of Shaykh al-Tariq al-Qadiriyya" in *Studies of West African Islamic History Vol.I.* ed. John R. Willis. London: Frank Cass, 130; here Batran is citing his biographer from the *Kitab al tara'if wa al tala'id*.

¹⁶⁹ Batran (1974) 52 citing al Kunti's '*ilm al shari'a al zahira*

¹⁷⁰ *Tarikh as-Soudan* by 'Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa'di trans. Hunwick. (2003), 20

time as well, the region was by no means less religiously diverse, and in his public issuing of scholarly opinions regarding ethics, al Kunti acknowledged that incantations of any form were acceptable.¹⁷¹ He refused to criminalize alternative non-Arabic incantations as other more puritanical scholars had. Similarly, nowhere in his manuscript on diplomacy does he ever refer to people as idolators (*mushrik*) or unbelievers (*kafir*) outside of the specific historical figures of the Qur'aysh who persecuted Muhammad. Another of his public rulings in the field of ethics maintained that any pilgrimage to any shrine in West Africa was to be rightly considered as fulfilling the sacred pilgrimage or *haji*. Lastly, he never demanded any exclusivity of his followers but insisted that it was ethical to have multiple teachers.

This text on diplomacy carries a rich interlacing of anonymous poets with teachings of the classical texts, and the plenorum of voices invited to share in the teachings of peace and the imagery for “quelling hostilities” that al Kunti draws upon is striking. Al Kunti condensed international space by allowing a variety of voices to speak through his text. Most importantly, he was effective in brokering peace. This publicly expounded poetics of politics worked in 1771 and in other instances. He was renowned for bring resolutions, and his diplomacy affected the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across a vast expanse of polities. An ethicist today who managed to insert herself effectively in such a context would never be called a charismatic leader.

Finally the biography written about his life is entitled “the two saints”. It is about al Kunti and his wife who is also an important figure in this pedagogical milieu, and yet

¹⁷¹ Ould el-Bara 204

in the historical research that has been published on al Kunti up to this point, there is nothing written about her. She is simply not mentioned and this despite the fact that the entire conclusion of the biography is about her. It is alarming that there is not more work in philosophy and in political thought on a scholar who is considered to have been preeminent both in terms of pedagogical influence, political influence and the extensivity of his writings. This chapter, therefore, is a modest attempt to move in the right direction by introducing his text of international relations as it was every bit as influential a text in the West Africa of the 18th century as Kant's brief treatises on international relations were in 18th century Europe.

It has been said that the wise exemplify mind making with it joints as with the joints of the body. For the head and eyes of [mind] are innocence, and its ears are comprehension, and its tongue is truth-speaking, and its heart is candor, and its hand is mercy, and its foot is peace, and its jurisdiction is justice, and its course is felicity, and its weapon is soft speech, and its sword is contentment, and its horse is conciliation, and its arrow is amiability, and its spear is caution, its shield is diplomacy, and its belt is astuteness, and its armor is the consoling sage, and its wealth is its etiquette, and its cache is the avoidance of sin, and sincere faith in Allah.¹⁷²

It was the command of Allah, that forgiveness be the ethics of man, and their diplomacy rests upon the power of their minds.¹⁷³

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¹⁷² Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 20

¹⁷³ Al-Kunti *Risalah* Ms. 17

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Curriculum Vitae

The author received his B.A. from Tulane University in Classics in 2000 where he also minored in African Studies and studied at the University of Ghana in Legon in 1999. He went on to receive his M.A. in African Politics and Quantitative Economics and Theory in 2006 from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC. From 2010-2016 he attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore as a doctoral student in Political Science where he wrote this dissertation.